



**CONTENTS** 



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No.82 Defence Officers' Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097. Phone: 2231 3637 / 2234 7399 E-mail: chandamama@vsnl.com

Reward for a Killer (New ta	les
of King Vikram and the Veta	ala)7
★ A Flame to World Peace (C	Cover story)10
★ Karavas of Sri Lanka (Mee	t the tribe)13
★ The Sewing Competition (S	Stories from
many cultures)	14
★ Ask Away (Prof. Manoj Das	S
answers queries from read	lers)23
★ News Flash	24
★ The Monkey Gardeners	
(Jataka tales)	26
★ For the Sake of a Staff	
(Legends of India)	28
★ Kaleidoscope	33
★ Arya (Comics)	37
★ Mail Bag	41
★ Towards Better English	41
★ ABC of Science	42
★ Vasudha	44
★ Indiascope	46
★ Laugh Till you Drop (Humo	ur)47
★ Fun Times	48
★ Puzzle Dazzle	50
★ Read and React	
(A novel competition)	53
★ Pit to Throne	
(From the Arabian Nights)	56
★ A Historic Win for India (Sp	oorts)59
★ A Heritage Railway	60
★ Mickey Mouse	62
★ Let Us Know	64
★ Photo Caption Contest	66

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#### Preserve and protect



Life is considered precious, whether it be that of human beings, animals and birds, or of even plants and other

forms of nature including mountains and rivers. All of them are born to live. We human beings would love to live as long as we can and take possible steps to preserve our body and mind. It is, therefore, an irony that man sometimes takes pleasure in destroying his brethren, as well as other living beings on the earth, and even nature. Examples are too many to be listed. We must learn to give up violence, avoid acts leading to the extinction of animal life, and indulging in destroying the wealth nature has provided us.

There is yet another category of creation which deserves preservation and protection by man, especially because they are creations by man himself. We refer to monuments, memorials and other types of construction. They are primarily born out of man's imagination, feelings and sentiments and are often commemoration of or tribute to human achievements. If barbaric invaders had vandalized them, it was not within our power to stop that. But shouldn't we the creators - desist from acts of destruction? Should we not do our best to keep them free from pollution, disfiguring and simple negligence?

A hundred years ago, our land was being ruled by foreigners. But, one must say, they had respect for our heritage. In 1904, a law was enacted to preserve and protect all monuments and memorials. Thanks to certain measures taken by the Government after Independence and by some organisations, many of these structures have remained in good shape for the benefit of posterity.

We are in the once-in-four-years phenomenon called the leap year. Let us set apart the one extra day this leap year gives us to ponder and spread the message of the need to preserve and protect the symbols of our past dreams and treasures of our heritage.

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"You are in charge of your feelings, beliefs,
and actions. And you teach others how to behave towards you.

When you cannot change other people, you can influence them through
your own behaviour and actions. By being a living role model of what
you want to receive from others, you create more of what you
want in your life."

- Eric Allenbaugh



to your near and dear abroad

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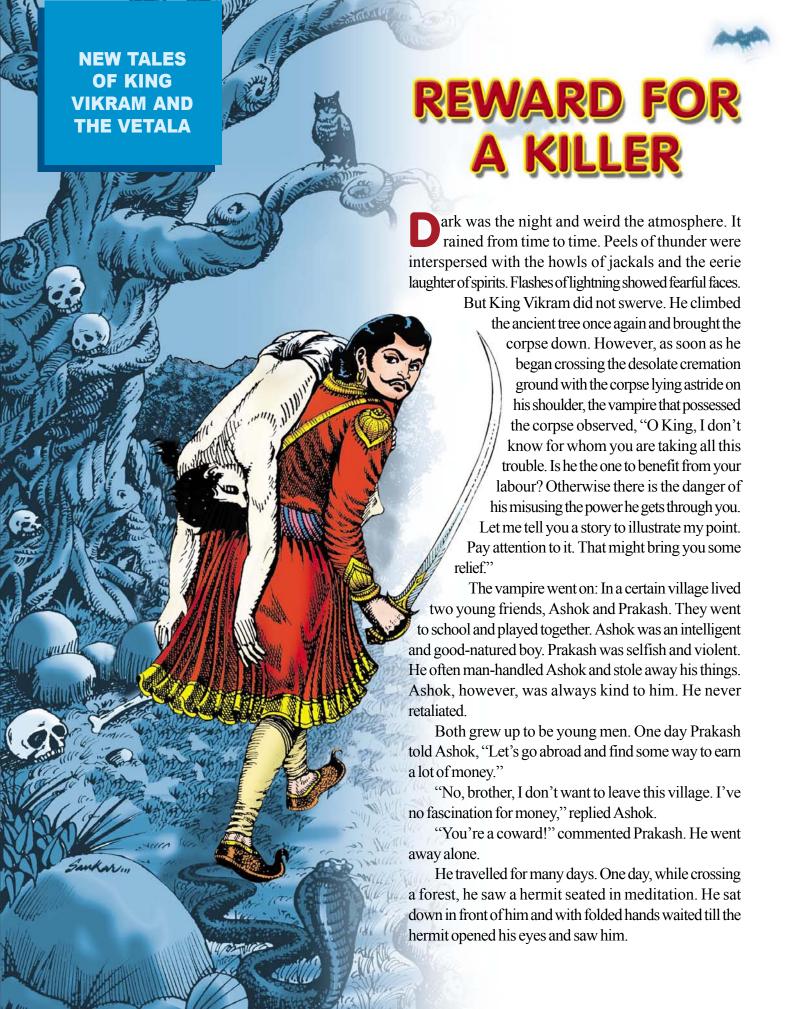
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"What do you want?" asked the hermit.

"O holy one! I want to become rich as quickly as possible," said Prakash.

"There are several ways for that. You can steal or cheat people and grow rich. But that won't give you any true happiness. If the Goddess of Wealth were to be pleased with you, then you can be rich as well as happy. I can teach you a hymn. If you sit on the hill yonder and chant, the goddess will be pleased with you sooner or later," said the hermit.

Prakash agreed to do as advised. The hermit taught him the hymn. He went to the hilltop and sat down and began chanting the hymn.

Now, that hill was the abode of an ogre. Ogres do not like anybody praying to gods and goddesses or uttering their names where *they* live. They find this very irritating.

The ogre of the hill approached Prakash and asked, "What do you mean by coming and sitting here?"

Prakash told him what his aim was.

The ogre laughed. "You must be a fool to pray to a goddess for wealth. Gods and goddesses are not so easily

pleased, my friend! It may take you years to get any result. That, too, is doubtful. As I see, you're not a devotee of any kind, but only a greedy chap. However, I can help you grow rich," said the ogre.

"I shall be thankful," said Prakash.

"I can teach you a hymn. By reciting that you can harm others or destroy their property. Thereby you can terrify people and extort money from them!" proposed the ogre.

Prakash jumped at the idea. He learnt the hymn and returned to his village taking the shortest route.

"I can perform amazing feats!" he declared boastfully to the villagers. They nodded or smiled. They did not believe him, but they did not wish to challenge him.

However, there was a young man, Ravi, who asked, "Prakash! Why do you make tall claims about your capacity? Can you show me just one amazing feat?"

"Tall claims? Well, see what I can do to you!" Prakash recited the hymn he had learnt from the ogre and looking at Ravi, he said, "Become dumb!"

Alas, Ravi could not speak a word however much he tried. Everybody was stunned.

"Do you wish to see more of my capacity?" asked the gleeful Prakash. He looked at a big mango tree teeming with fruit and recited his hymn and said, "Get reduced to ashes!"

The tree caught fire at once and became a heap of ashes in no time. The owner of the tree, a poor farmer, burst into wailing.

"Shut up!" shouted Prakash. "Or I'll make you dumb too!"

Ashok elbowed his way forward and caught hold of Prakash and said, "You must be hungry. Come to my house, I'll give you some food."

At Ashok's house Prakash ate to his heart's content. "Brother, you ought not to use your power in this fashion!" Ashok said softly.

"Why not? I'll finish you off if you stand in my way!" said Prakash waving his arm menacingly.

Ashok had attentively heard the hymn Prakash had recited twice. He remembered the lines. Suddenly he recited the hymn and looking at Prakash, said, "Become dumb!"

A horrified Prakash soon realised that he had indeed grown dumb. He lifted a chair and threw it at Ashok. Luckily Ashok was not hit. Prakash pursued him and caught hold of him. He started beating him mercilessly. But Ashok was stronger. He threw Prakash down. His head hit a boulder. He died on the spot.

Ashok was taken into custody and produced before the king. Instead of sending him to prison, the king appointed him his minister.

The vampire fell silent for a moment and then asked in a challenging tone: "How could the king reward a killer with such a high position? Answer my question, if you can. Should you keep mum though you may know the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

King Vikram replied forthwith: "No doubt the king was a man of very sound judgement. He could see all the

qualities of an ideal minister present in Ashok. Ashok was kind-hearted. That is why he tolerated Prakash as a friend.

"But he was a man who was conscious of what is good or bad for the community. As soon as he understood that Prakash would prove to be a menace to the people, he acted to silence him.

"This he could do because he had a highly alert mind. He had picked up the hymn Prakash recited by listening to it only twice. He could act decisively at the right moment. These are no ordinary qualities. Ashok cannot be called a killer. Prakash had died rather accidentally. The king did right in rewarding Ashok."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip and flew back to the ancient tree.



#### Roses for all times

Since time immemorial, poets, writers, and lovers have used the rose – the 'queen of flowers' – as a symbol of love. The rose had held many other connotations as well.

Many Europeans once used the rose as a symbol of secrecy. Servants in England wore roses behind their ears as a sign that anything they overheard would not be repeated. A bowl of roses in the dining room of a German home was an indication to the guests that they could speak freely. Perhaps the closed petals of the rosebud suggested confidentiality.

Egyptian Pharaohs used to cultivate roses as far back as 5,000 years ago, and many of them even had roses buried along with them.

The ancient Romans made wine from the flower. Rose essence was used to flavour ice-cream, and roses were actually eaten in salads! Rose water and rose oil were used for medicinal purposes for centuries. Today, rose oil is used in cosmetics, perfumes, and even in the flavouring of syrups.

#### Cover Story:

#### A Flame to World Peace

rare honour has been conferred on India by the Organising Committee of the 28th Olympic Games. The Olympic torch will pass through our country for the first time since the Modern Games started 108 years ago. The Olympic torch, which will be ceremonially lit at Olympia in May, will start on its journey through the five continents immediately thereafter. The flame will kindle the spirits of thousands of sports lovers in India when the torch relay is held in Delhi on June 10.

The tradition of lighting the torch and keeping the flame burning during the days of the Games began in 776 B.C. and continued for 1,100 years till the Games was banned by Emperor Theodosius in 394 A.D. The world had to wait for another 1,500 years for the Olympic Games to be revived in 1896. However, the flame burned for the first time only at the Amsterdam Games in 1928. That the flame should be taken by relay from Greece to the venue of the Games, wherever it is held, began only with the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

The Ancient Games used to be held in and around Olympia in Greece. The flame was lit in honour of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. A victory at the Games would reflect on the home city of the athlete. The olive wreath given to him in front of the temple of Zeus conferred on him a touch of divinity, and fame followed him for the rest of his life, making him immortal in the annals of Olympics history. The athletes were thus elevated to the status of gods and semi-gods.

The solemn ceremony of lighting the torch was attended by 11 priestesses. The High Priestess would hold the torch till a concave mirror caught the rays from the sun and ignited the torch. It would then be taken by foot to the site of the Games. Each runner carried the torch with the Olympic flame for a short distance before handing it to the next runner. The final carrier of the torch would usually be a sports celebrity of the country hosting the Games. He or she would run around the stadium and move towards the cauldron or urn and light it with the torch. The flame would burn till the Games lasted; it would be put out at an equally solemn ceremony. The lighting of the Olympic flame and the torch relay have thus become an integral part of the Olympic Games.

Here is a description of the lighting ceremony in Olympia and the torch taken to Berlin (1936): Young maidens dressed in white stepped towards the Haltis. The moment the sun rays fell on the concave mirror, the sacred flame flared up. The High Priestess then lit the torch. The 7,000 strong crowd watching the ceremony held its breath. A chorus of priestesses walked from the Haltis to the altar of Kronios, in front of which the relay started. Thirty youths took position around the priestesses. The youth carried the torch first to Athens and from there to Berlin via Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovokia. Some 3, 840 torchbearers took part in the relay. The Greeks had set up another tradition by proclaiming suspension of all hostilities for a certain period before and after the Games, to establish the importance of the common heritage. This tradition has remained even during the Modern Games when countries stopped wars so that the youngsters serving in the army could take part in the Games.

The theme of the flame of this year's Games at Athens is "Pass the flame, Unite the world". The torch is a powerful symbol of the ideas behind the Games — peace, participation and the power of the human spirit. "In bringing the flame to Delhi," says the Organising Committee, "we are recognising India's great contribution to the Olympic movement and extending an invitation to all Indians to celebrate the homecoming of the Olympic Games (Athens)."

January 2004 

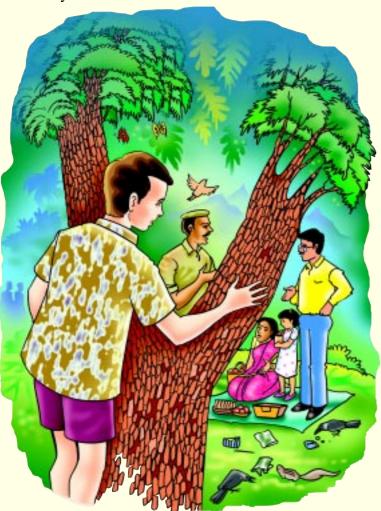
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10



# Little Kannagi and Longwood Shola

Annagi, fondly called Kanna, lived in a beautiful place surrounded by cool hills, with plenty of space to run about and so many fun filled things to do. The summer holidays had started and it was time for her cousins Raju and Chinna to spend their vacation in this beautiful place. Together they would enjoy doing things like playing hide and seek, and making bird calls to fool others! At the end of every summer vacation Raju and Chinna would be very sad that they had to go back to the city where there were very few trees, let alone trees on which they could climb. This time also they were determined to enjoy every bit of their vacation.



One day Raju had gone towards the forest, which was called Longwood Shola. It was a lovely day with a gentle breeze blowing. He heard raised voices. An unfamiliar voice was heard shouting, "This is a free country, why shouldn't I come here for a picnic?"

Raju recognised the village Math teacher's voice shouting, "If we don't protect the Shola trees, our villagers will have no water to drink, our streams will dry up." This was followed by the Forest Guard Uncle's voice explaining that certain forests were so important that they had to be protected. He was saying that such forests called "Reserved Forest" by the Indian government had Forest Guards and other officials to protect the forest and the wildlife in it.

Raju was confused with the chain of conversation he had overheard. Soon he saw some picnickers trooping out. They were the same people who had been shouting at the Forest Guard! He was aghast at the mess that they had created. There were plastic wrappers, glass bottles and food all strewn about. He thought to himself 'Oh! So that explains why there are so many crows here. Uncle Arun was right when he said that these scavenger crows become a menace and raid the nests of other birds to take away young chicks of Bulbul, blackbird, jungle fowl and many others. The glass pieces must be hurting small animals that step on them."

On the way back home Raju was brooding about eagles and kites and on reaching home he yelled, "Kanna, Chinna! Come here, let me tell you what happened," and told them all that he had seen and heard.

That night Kanna, Chinna and Raju were unusually quiet as they were thinking about the beautiful Longwood

The Sholas are patches of evergreen tropical rainforests in the valleys of Southern and Western Ghats, surrounded by natural grasslands. Longwood Shola is a 116 hectare typical Shola located near Kothagiri town, about 50 km from Coimbatore. It is at an elevated level close to the junction of Eastern and Western Ghats. Sholas are rich in moss, orchids and ferns. Longwood Shola is a Reserved Forest under the control of the Forest Department. In May 1998, a Longwood Shola Watchdog Committee (LSWC) was formed by the local school teachers and social workers. The part about "Children of Longwood" is entirely imaginary, but it could be true!

Shola with its many different kinds of birds, orchids, butterflies and animals. Kanna told them about the leopards that would come to the forest sometime and the barking deer giving an alarm call to alert the rest of the animals making all the animals scurry up back to safe places. They talked about the different bright coloured orchids and butterflies and wondered whether the forest would change. Then the bravest and youngest of the three, little Kanna, went up to her father and asked him "Father, is it true that there is only one person to guard our beautiful Shola? We get so many things like herbs, firewood and fresh air and water from the forest. Why shouldn't all of us take care of it?"

Kanna's father hugged her tight as he understood how much the children loved the forest and wanted to

protect it. He thought hard for a while and, instead of giving an answer, asked them how they would protect it. Chinna was the first to say, "We'll tell everybody not to throw waste in the forest. We'll

waste kills the small animals."

said, "We should also explain that the water streams are so precious that we should not allow waste to choke the streams." Kanna, who understood removing

waste was not enough, said, "We should put our heads together and ask all children to fight and protect the Shola"

It was an exciting Sunday. All the children told their mothers they were going to do something important and rushed off, wearing their best clothes and shoes. Soon the children decided they had to make all the adults and children in the village understand that their every action affected the forest sooner or later. Little Kittu, all of five years, added that they should protect the forest forever.

The mothers were in for a surprise when the children came back with a determined look and a plan in their minds. Sapna came running and shouted, "We are the children of the forest and we will take care of the Shola".

Every household rendered the same phrase "Children of the forest".

> The "Children of Longwood Shola" met every Sunday morning near Longwood Shola and each Sunday was a fun filled

> > different things to take care of the Shola. The first Sunday they enacted a play called "Colours of grass". In this, a Deer and a Rabbit talk about new colours and shapes of grass and are told by a small frightened squirrel that it was not coloured grass but a dangerous thing called



plastic which would kill them slowly by blocking the intestines. At the end of the play, little Kittu announced that the whole village should start by making Longwood Shola safe for the animals and birds. The adults, who were at first amused by this play, soon understood the importance of the "Children of Longwood Shola" and joined them in these Sunday programmes.

Some of the parents gave them more information and helped them understand how Sholas are different from the forests in the plains, how the trees here grow slowly and how the grassland around the Shola is like a sponge that keeps the water and then slowly releases them into little streams all through the year. Uncle Srinivas, who was a photographer, got them pictures of different snakes,

orchids, spiders and birds that were found in this Shola and not in other parts of India.

The children got the people of the surrounding villages also thinking. Subsequently the adults formed a group, which would regularly patrol the area and stop anybody from cutting trees or killing wild animals. The initiative, which was started during that vacation, continued to inspire many more children over the years and each year children from other far away places came to see this protected forest and went back determined to protect wildlife and forests near their own homes.

- By Shantha Bhushan Courtesy: Kalpavriksh and the National Biodiversity and Strategic Action Plan

#### Meet the ... Karavas of Sri Lanka

The Karavas are a community that has contributed a great deal to Sri Lanka's economy. At one time they were a group of seafarers and warriors. Later they developed fishing as their main occupation, and grew into a trading community that today occupies a key position in the urban economy of the country. Traditionally they claim to have descended from the Kauravas, who were scattered after their defeat in the Mahabharata war.

Today, the Karavas live over widely separated areas ranging from the southwest of the Southern Province, to the Central and North Central Provinces and to the North Western Province. However, they are still predominantly a coastal population, engaged in fishing. This is done using outrigger canoes known as oru or rafts called catamaran.

Urban living and involvement in commerce has led to a stratification of Karava society into upper, middle and lower classes. However, class distinctions are not pronounced, and a bond of common social identity and traditional culture unites the Karavas. Another striking feature is that the community includes Buddhists, Hindus and Christians.

During certain festivals, the Karavas perform masked ritual dances known as *Kolam*. The performers, wearing wooden masks painted in resplendent colours, represent gods, demons, and legendary characters. These dances reflect the pagan beliefs of the predominantly Buddhist community.



## The Sewing Competition

ong, long ago there lived a woman who was very good at sewing. She could sew things so well and so fast that no one could beat her. So she became a seamstress to earn her living and was very much in demand. Anyone who wanted some good sewing done quickly would send for her. And the seamstress would always do the job well and in time.

But as the people praised her so much, she grew to be very proud of herself and her ability. She boasted about it to all and sundry. She said one day that she was clever enough to beat any human being and not just that! She was clever enough to beat the devil himself. She had no idea, of course, that the devil would actually hear her! So she thought it was quite safe to boast the way she did. But people talked about what she claimed and before long her words reached the ears of the devil. The devil was greatly annoyed with her and came to challenge her to a sewing race.

The seamstress was terrified when she saw the devil. She realized that she had done an extremely foolish thing and shuddered to imagine what the consequences might be. At first she denied that she had said anything about defeating the devil. But too many people had heard her say it, so the devil paid no heed to her words. In fact, he refused to leave the place until they had had their contest! It was decided that they would each make a shirt and see who could finish it first. If the devil won, he would take the seamstress to hell with him. And if the seamstress won, the devil would leave the place forever and never bother them again.

The contest started with the cutting out. The seamstress brought her own pair of scissors. The devil had already come armed with a huge one. The same amount of cloth was given to both.

Snap snap! went the scissors of the seamstress.

Snap snap! went the scissors of the devil.

But both took exactly the same time to cut out the shirt. But once they started sewing, it was a different matter! The devil, who had never made a shirt in his life, wanted to save time. So he threaded the entire reel of cotton so that he might not have to waste any time rethreading his needle. But that was a foolish thing to do because each time he made a stitch he had to run around the house three times to pull the thread through. And he made just one stitch at a time with his needle instead of making several. What's more, he quite forgot to tie a

knot at the end of the thread. So after he had run around the house three times, he discovered to his dismay that the stitch had come out and he had to do it all over again. He tied a knot this time but he had to run after every stitch so he grew very tired after a while and started to huff and puff.

Then something else happened. As he had taken the entire reel at one go, the thread got tangled up with knots and the devil had to undo each one before he could make the next stitch. He muttered and cursed loudly but made no headway with the shirt at all.

The seamstress, on the other hand was quite used to sewing. She threaded the needle with a convenient amount of thread and made a strong knot at the end so that the stitch would not come out. She went on and on sewing, steadily and quickly, and never once looked up until the shirt was complete. Once it was made she raised her eyes to see what the devil was doing and whether he had already completed the shirt before her. But she could not see the devil or the shirt he was making. She wondered what had happened when she saw the devil coming round the house, huffing and puffing, the needle in his hand. The cloth lay on the ground with just a few stitches on it. The devil had not been able to complete even one full

The seamstress was delighted and threw the shirt at the devil. The devil was so ashamed to be beaten by a mere woman that he sank into the ground in a glow

seam!

of flames and never returned there. In fact, he never dared to accept another sewing challenge again.

The seamstress had learned her lesson, too, and never boasted about her cleverness after that. She realized what a narrow escape she had had and that she had been able to beat the devil not just because of the devil's ignorance but she had put her entire heart and soul in her work.

But the story of the devil and the seamstress having a contest went round and was remembered by all. Even now when a person does any work in a clumsy way, people compare him to "the devil who had to run around the house three times for every stitch"!





### A Jester's Dilemma

here was once a king called Vinayraj who was fond of playing chess. But who would dare play against a king? None except the Court Jester, Madhay, who could afford to take liberties with the king. The two used to spend long hours in front of the chess board. And what would be the stakes? The king would put precious things, sometimes deliberately, knowing fully well that if he were to lose, then they all would only go to the Jester who was his favourite. Madhay, on the other hand, would put only ordinary things as stake. More than these stakes, the king was interested in learning from the Jester some of his many wise moves in the game. When they played, they forgot that one was a King and the other a

Jester; they were equals for the sake of the game.

One day, as they were playing, the Jester's young sister was ushered into the royal chamber.

Mohini had gone to the palace to fetch her brother. The king was struck by her beauty, and when Vinayraj and Madhav sat before the board, the next day, the king made a strange suggestion: would the Jester offer his sister as stake, so that if the king won the game, he could possess Mohini and make her one of the queens?

The king offered a whole city in the kingdom as his stake which, if the jester were to win the game, would become his own. Madhay, though a Jester, was a shrewd man. "My lord, the stakes do not balance well. I'm not interested in owning any city. May I, therefore, suggest that you put your sister as your stake."

Vinayraj thought for a while. He had already made up his mind to make the Jester's sister his wife. "All right, I accept your suggestion."

The game started. Both of them played with great concentration. The king made his moves after much thought, all the while remembering the tricks he had learnt from the Jester.

When he found that he had almost cornered the Jester, his thoughts went astray. He began dreaming of the wonderful moments he would spend with Mohini when she became his wife. He was caught off guard, and the Jester won! The king had to concede defeat.

> The Jester was happy that he did not have to give away his sister, though she might have become a queen. "Now, my lord, please send for your sister; I shall marry her and make her my wife."

"Did you say marry, my friend?" asked the king, rather unbelievingly. "Look here, I've only one sister and she is already married to the wealthiest merchant here. Madhav, you ask for anything else, and I shall give it to you willingly."

"But that is not fair, my lord," protested the Jester.
"You had made her your stake, and I have a right on her.
You can't go back on your word, my lord!"

The king realised that he had been cornered even outside the chess board. "All right. My sister is coming here tomorrow to meet her mother. She may not go with you of her own accord. But I shall give you an opportunity to take her away, and I shall not question you. The rest will depend on your ability."

A day after her visit, Vinayraj persuaded Princess Vanitha to go with him for a walk along the riverside. On the way there was a pond full of lotuses in bloom. It was a moonlit night. "What a lovely sight!" remarked the king.

Suddenly, his sister had an idea. "Let me pluck some lotuses for you, Vinay." She then went over to the edge of the pond and leaned to pluck a flower when she tripped and fell into the pond. As pre-arranged with the Jester, the king disappeared from the scene.

Princess Vanitha looked around. When she did not see her brother, she thought that he might have continued walking and would not have seen her falling into the pond. "Is there anybody to help me?" she shouted. "Help! Please help me!"

The Jester was just waiting for such a call for help. He quickly got down from his horse and rushed to the pond and extended his hand. The Princess caught hold of his hand and managed to come out of the pond. "Young lady, now that you've caught hold of my hand, I shall not allow you to leave it. You've to go with me, marry me, and live with me as my wife."

Vanitha looked horrified. "I'm Princess Vanitha. I'm grateful to you, Sir, for saving me, but I'm aleady married."

"All that we'll discuss later," said the Jester. "Right now, I can't leave you here all alone, and so I'm taking you home. Come, get on to my horse."

Finding that she had no other option, the princess mounted the horse and sat behind him. When the Jester stopped, she found herself in front of a modest house in a secluded corner of the capital city. Once they were inside, the Jester told her who he was and how he had won her



in a game of chess. The princess realised that her brother had, without her consent, staked her, and she should now save the honour of the king. "All right, I shall stay here, but we'll get married only on the next full moon day."

The princess did not give any hint that she was contemplating an escape from the place. Two or three days before the full moon day, she got an opportunity to leave the house stealthily. Instead of going back to the palace, she found her way to her husband's place who, fortunately, had not come to know of her misadventure.

On finding that the princess had escaped, Madhav straight away went to the king and reported the matter. Vinayraj told him that she might have gone back to her husband and he himself would not be able to send for her. He suggested that Madhav could go to her place and persuade her to go with him.

The Jester now proceeded to where Princess Vanitha and her husband were living. Vanita's husband was angry with both the king, who had staked her for the sake of a game of chess, and with the Jester for insisting that Vanitha



married him though she was already married. He told Madhav that just as he had won the princess in a game of chess, he could fight with him and win her once again. To which the Jester agreed, though with great reluctance.

The next day both of them got ready for a duel. The fight did not last long because the princess's husband lost his balance and fell down when his sword broke into two and one end piered through his heart and

he died on the spot.

The Jester did not want to

suggest to the princess that she could not have any

objection now to marry him and live as his wife. She was full of grief over the loss of her husband. Madhav decided to wait

till the cremation was over. At the cremation, as was the

custom, the princess went round the pyre seven times and then lit it. When the pyre was ablaze,

Vanitha, as a faithful wife, jumped into the fire and the

rising flames took her life then and there. Madhav was inconsolable. He left the kingdom and began wandering aimlessly. Whenever he thought of Princess Vanitha, he became remorseful. True, he had begun to like her very much. Now, he was full of respect for her. She had proved her filialty to her husband.

The Jester was also sad that her husband had to lose his life on account of him, though he was not responsible for his death. It was an accident. But he was sorry for the princess's husband as he had given him a fair chance to win her hand.

After wandering for a few days, he reached a village where he met a fakir. The Jester tried to draw consolation from his words of wisdom. During their long conversation, the Fakir happened to tell him of dead persons getting back their life. This gave him some hope that he would be able to bring back the Princess and her husband to life. He made searching questions with the wise man who could only tell him that there was an obscure village at the foot of the hills where, he had heard, some persons possessed strange powers. "You may go there and do service to the people and earn their gratitude. Probably then, they might be willing to part with the magic *mantra* to give life to the dead."

Madhav started for the hills, which he reached after several days of walking. In a village there, he saw the people killing birds, cooking them, and eating them. They would then collect the feathers and skin and chant an incantation. Lo and behold, he saw the feathers and skin turning into live birds and flying away! The Jester knew

that he had reached the village mentioned by the Fakir.

Just as the Fakir had advised, he stayed in the village and joined the villagers in their activities. He endeared himself to them and one day when he witnessed the strange sight again, he made bold to ask them how that was possible. Some of them led him to a very

old lady. After listening to the pleas of the villagers on behalf of the Jester, she agreed to teach him the *mantra*. Taking him to a dark room in her hut, she made him chant the *mantra* half-a-dozen times.

Madhav did not waste a moment. He rushed back to the kingdom and went up to the place where the princess had sacrified her life. He sprinkled water over the ashes and chanted the *mantra* three times. When he opened his eyes, he saw Vanitha rising from the ashes

He chanted the incantation three more times and he could now see the princess's husband coming back to life.

The Jester was very happy. The princess's husband was the first to speak. "Madhay, you won the

Vanitha." Vanitha remained silent, and the Jester was unable to decide whether he should accept the offer made to

accept the offer made to him.

Just then, the Fakir happened to pass that way. He watched the Jester's dilemma and told him: "Remember, Madhav, that you gave life to her. So, you're like her father. Do your duty

Madhav caught hold of Vanitha's hands and placed them on her husband's hands. Without uttering a word, he left the

as a father!"

place. The Jester was not seen in the kingdom

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#### The dutiful student

afterwards.

Miss Ruth, the English teacher, was fed up with one of her students, Rahul, who would persist in mixing up his past and present participles, despite her best efforts to teach him the difference between them. In everything else, he was a model pupil, but grammar was his Achilles' heel – never would he get it right!

At last, one day, Miss Ruth lost her temper when Rahul came up to her and said, "Miss, I have wrote my composition." She banged the table with her ruler and said, "Rahul, I have repeatedly told you not to say 'I have wrote'. Now sit at your desk and write 'I have written' two hundred times, and bring it to me before you go home!" She then left the room.

School was given over, and all the boys left - except for Rahul, who sat at his desk, diligently writing out his imposition. When he had finished, he took it to the staffroom, to find that Miss Ruth was not there. So, when she returned a few minutes later, she found the completed pages on her desk, along with the following explanatory note: "I have wrote 'I have written' two hundred

times like you asked me to, and I have went home - Rahul."

# Choef in a Jag

he Land of the Fool was a ghost's favourite haunt. This was the only Land that he ever knew. Here he was at home. Here he had lived before his death. Death due to his own foolishness, if one may add.

One day, he climbed a tree, taking along an axe. He selected a branch of the tree to chop. He moved along the fork, dug in his heels firmly in the bark of the branch, pulled out his axe and started cutting the branch between where he stood and where the branch took off from the tree. He made the cut all right. Gravity did the rest. The branch dropped off. With it came the man, too. He tumbled, head first, hit a huge stone and died.

One moment he was alive. Next moment he was a ghost.

He did not leave the Land, even after turning into a ghost. He stayed on. Where else could he go? Here he knew the people. They were fools. He, too, was a fool.

He enjoyed his new status. He could move at will. He could drop down chimneys, slide in through pipes and tunnels and rat holes. He could even walk in through cracks in walls. He had no defined shape. He could assume any form he chose. He could be bigger than the biggest elephant; or be smaller than the smallest mite.

There was only one problem. He could not make his wife talk to him.

"I'm here, right by your side. So don't cry," he tried to tell her. But she behaved as if she heard nothing.

"Can't you see me, dear?" he shouted. But he could not make his wife hear him. His throat turned hoarse. He became angry and scowled, "You silly woman! If you think you don't need me any more, it suits me.

I won't have anything more to do with you."

He wandered all around the house.

Then he saw an empty brass jug with a narrow neck. Its lid lay by the side of the pot. It was the jug his wife had chosen to offer to the god of the Sea.

He did not know that. "Can I get inside this jug?" The idea came to him. He decided to find out.

Quickly he poured himself into the jug. It was easy. It was fun, too. The ghost curled himself up. The space was snug and cosy. "Nice place to rest," he told himself. A few yawns later, he was deep asleep.

He slept soundly. He felt nothing, till he heard a scratching sound. He wondered what caused the

noise. He looked out and saw the lid turning round the neck.

"Ah, that makes it more cozy," he told himself. "Here I can sleep, undisturbed," the ghost turned over and snored.

He woke up with a start, his sides knocking against the bulge of the jug.

"Where am I?" he asked himself.

Then he remembered he had gone to sleep inside the jug. He looked up and found that the lid was in place. But the jug was flying in space. The ghost could feel it.

"Thank the Devil! I don't have bones. I'm just a spirit. Otherwise my bones would have broken after hitting the sides of this jug. But what's happening? Let me get out and see for myself," the ghost stretched himself and drove sleep away. He reached out and tried to push the lid up.

But it won't budge. He knocked at the sides of the jug. He hurt his knuckles. The sides did not crack.

It took him some time to realize that he was stuck for good. For the jug had no crack. Not even a hairline crack.

"Oh Devil! I am trapped! How can I get out?" the foolish ghost was at his wit's end.

The waves rolled the jug around. The ghost received a few hard knocks. He was knocked out, for some time. When he regained his senses, he felt dazed. Thank the Devil! He had not broken any bones. He could not. He had no bones. He was just loose-limbed. Airy, if one could say so.

He felt no more jolts. The jug had come to rest. The ghost tried to guess where he was. He sharpened his ears. He heard the rush of waters; the splash of fish in motion.

"I'm in deep waters. Maybe, I'm at the bottom of the sea," the ghost mumbled to himself. "How will I get out of the jug? If I get out, I can be free, well, if anyone helps me get out," he worried.

Then he heard the Devil's voice.

"Where are you, my revered Devil?" the ghost asked.

"On the shore. I am standing on the seashore. I'm afraid of the sea. Once I tried to swim; and I almost drowned. I still have not got over my fear. But I can make myself heard. That is how I could talk to you."

"Please save me!" the ghost begged.

"I can't do that, on my own. But I am sure you will escape, sooner or later," the Devil said.

"How can you be so sure?" the ghost asked.

"Well, I see plenty of fishing boats out here. One of the fishermen may throw the net. The jug may get caught in the net. The fisherman may haul it out, thinking he has made a big catch. He may see the jug. He may unscrew the lid, out of curiosity," the Devil said, using the word MAY because he, too, was not quite sure of himself.

"Aha," the ghost saw a ray of hope.

"When that happens, you escape. Well, when someone helps you out, offer him a gift. Anything you want to give. I shall deliver it to the man. That is where I can help," said the Devil.

"Tell me, how long will that take?"

"I must be God to answer that question," the Devil showed his helplessness. "But I hope it won't take long."

The ghost decided he would give anyone who got him out of the jug a jug full of gold coins. He knew he could get the coins from the Devil.

Years passed. A hundred years? A thousand years? Nobody knew. Not the ghost either. For, he had no calendar to keep track of time. Every day seemed as long as a month. There was nothing to do, but wait. The wait continued.

The ghost began to lose patience. Would he remain

imprisoned forever! Would he ever be free again? Fear gripped him. Fear of staying, forever, cooped up in the jug broke his heart.

"I promised a jugful of gold coins. But nobody came to my rescue. I think I must now stop offering anything to mere mortals. All my offerings must be to the Devil. Devil! I know you hear me. Let someone save me. I shall give him no riches. Instead, I will gift him to you. I will tear him to bits. I'll make a ghost of him! You'll have one more ghost to serve you," the ghost screamed in dismay.

"That is a brilliant idea. Then you'll have company," the Devil's voice came over clearly.

For long, nothing happened. The ghost despaired of ever being free.

Then he felt the tug. The jug began to move. The ghost felt thrilled. Soon, he would be free.



The jug broke the waters. A firm hand reached out for the jug.

The ghost knew his moment was about to arrive. He heard the lid turn round the rim. That meant only one thing. Whoever was holding the jug was trying to get the lid off. That was the chance for which the ghost was waiting. He knew the lid was off when a tiny shaft of light seeped in.

The ghost bounced out of the jug. He grinned, happily. Quickly he took the shape of a huge ghost, ten feet tall, with burning eyes and flailing arms, sharp claws and big teeth. The fisherman clutched the side of the boat. He tried to get over the shock.

"Get ready, man. You saved me. You get a gift for that. I make you a ghost. Together we will have fun time," thundered the ghost.

"Oh, no," groaned the man.

"You've no choice. I made a promise to the Devil. I

offered to turn the man who saves me into a ghost. I shall tear you to shreds. You end up as a ghost. Being a ghost is not a bad thing, after all. You don't feel hunger; nor do you feel thirsty. You can take any shape or form you like," the ghost readied to grab the man.

"One minute. What you say may be true. But how do I know? Is it true that a ghost can take any shape, be small like a mouse or big like a shark?" the fisherman was from the Land of the Wise. He saw the danger he faced and decided he would try to fool the ghost.

"Believe me, I made myself small enough to be inside the jug," the ghost bragged.

"I don't believe that," the fisherman teased.

"Want to see?" the ghost challenged.

"Of course. Show me how you could fit inside this little jug. Then I will happily agree to be a ghost," said the fisherman.

"Watch," the ghost began to shrink in size. He was all gas, no substance and could easily pour himself into the jug. Instantly the fisherman capped the jug and tightened the lid by turning it along the groove.

It took some time for the ghost to realize that he was trapped again.

"Let me out! I won't make a ghost of you. I'll give you a jug full of gold coins. Believe me, let me out, please!" the ghost screamed.

But the lid remained firmly in position. The ghost knocked against the sides as the jug flew in space. It hit the waters, giving yet another big shock to the ghost, and sank to the bottom of the sea. There, so the story goes, still stays the ghost from the Land of the Fool, imprisoned in the jug.

- By R.K. Murthi

Can you believe, the British once went to war over a sailor's ear! It happened in 1739, when Britain launched hostilities against Spain because a Spanish officer had supposedly sliced off the

ear of a ship's captain named Robert Jenkins.



# Send your questions to: Ask Away Chandamama India Ltd. No.82 Defence Officers Colony Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097 or e-mail to askaway@chandamama.org.

Q. Why do Indians revere the Himalayas?
 Subhashree Das, Bhubaneswar

The pioneers of Indian culture, the Rishis and the Kavis (seer-poets), had a deep insight into the influence Nature had on human mind, apart from the incalculable benefit man derives from it. They looked upon the great rivers of India as divinities and also adored the Himalayas, the source of some of the major rivers of India like the Ganga.

While everything for them was a manifestation of the Divine, in some aspects of Nature the Divine's presence could be felt more prominently. The Himalaya was such a natural phenomenon. "Among the mountains I am the Himalaya," says Krishna in the Gita. The foothills of the Himalayan range have been the abode of celebrated sages; numerous holy places have existed in the Himalayan domain since times immemorial. Vyasa edited the Vedas and composed the Mahabharata as well as the Bhagavatam, while sitting in a Himalayan cave. The sublime atmosphere of the high mountains spontaneously arouse a serene feeling in the seekers.

The ancients considered several earthly objects as symbolic of things celestial. Mount Kailas is the dwelling place of Lord

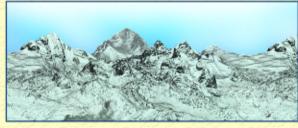
Siva. The Himalaya, according to them, was the passage to the heavens. The Pandavas took that path for their last journey.

This apart, let us see how important the Himalaya is, historically and realistically. This is how K.M. Panikkar sees it: "The geographical feature which dominates India most is the Himalaya. There are no mountain ranges anywhere in the world which have contributed so much to shape the life of a country as the Himalayas have in respect of India. It is not only the political life of the people of Hindustan, but the religion, mythology, art and literature of the Hindu that bear the imprint of the great mountain barrier.

"To the Hindus, the Himalays have been a perpetual source of wonder and veneration. To the people of the South a thousand and five hundred miles away, the men of the sea coast, to the dwellers of the desert land of Rajputana, no less than to the inhabitants of the Gangetic valley, the Himalayas have been the symbol of India.

"The majesty of the snow-clad peaks visible from afar, the inaccessibility of even the lesser ranges, the mysteries of the gigantic glaciers and the magnificence of the great rivers that emerge

from its gorges have combined to give to the Himalayas a majesty which no other mountain range anywhere can claim." (The Himalayas in Indian Life.)





**Sweet warning** 

One of the leading chocolate manufacturers in Britain has started packing chocolate bars with a warning: don't eat too many! There's so much talk about junk food and the havoc it causes to health. Fortunately, chocolates do not qualify to be called junk! However, dieticians who have researched into the effects of chocolate on the human system have come to the conclusion that a line has to be drawn—thus far and no further. It can only be hoped that the warning will vary from one brand to another brand of chocolate. Open the wrapper and find out for yourself. You will be lucky if the advice or sweet

warning will permit you to eat one more after you have relished one bar!

#### Water instead of air

Ever since rubberised wheels became popular, first it was solid rubber, and later pneumatic tyres on the wheel, resulting in smoother driving. The bicycle wheel, for instance, has a tyre of solid rubber, with a rubber tube inside which is inflated with air. Why not water, instead of air? M.V. Subhash, a freelance photographer in Kerala, had this poser in mind



and one day, he deflated the tube and poured water into it, sealed the tube with the same valve to prevent any leakage, and rode the vehicle. He found that he could now ride faster! One of the advantages is, if earlier he was inflating the tube with air once a week, he need *not* now fill it with water even for a whole year. In fact, he had been riding his 'water-wheeler' since January 2002. No water has evaporated, nor has it leaked!



#### Population up by two!

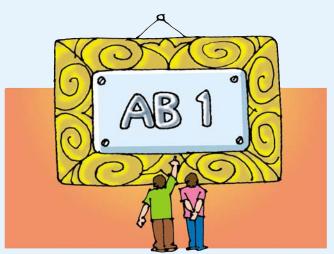
There has been one more addition to an endangered species in Singapore - in the zoo which, incidentally, is the first in the world to breed Done Langurs. The zoo has reported the birth of a baby - the second one in recent times. This species is commonly seen in Viet Nam and Laos. The two baby langurs are attracting large crowds for another reason, too. The zoo authorities are in search of names for the young ones and have announced a competition.

#### **Recitation on train**

On July 1, a new train was introduced to run from Kanyakumari, the land's end, to New Delhi. Named the Thirukkural Express, the train is scheduled to reach the country's capital on the fourth day. On its inaugural run, on board was 5-year-old P. Prathiksha from Kolathur, near Kanyakumari. During the journey she visited all the 20 odd compartments, reciting verses from the Kural for the benefit of the passengers. By the time the journey ended, she had recited all the 1,330 couplets of



Thirukkural, which was written by Thiruvalluvar some 2,000 years ago.



## Fancy price for car number

Owning a car is one thing, but getting it a fancy registration number is another. A dealer in photographic goods in Trivandrum obtained a fancy number at an auction conducted by the Regional Transport Authority. The number was AB-1 and the bid went up to Rs.49,000. The gentleman raised it by another Rs.800—hoping that nobody would take it to half a lakh or more. He was not disappointed.

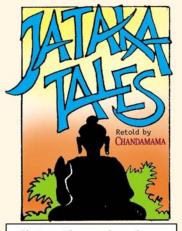
# Non-stop tabla recital

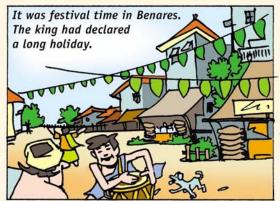
The Guinness Book of World Records has given an entry to 28-year-old Prasad Sriram Choudhari of Jalna, Maharashtra, who played on the percussion instrument, tabla, non-stop for 46 hours. His aim was to play for 50 hours to beat the record of 36 hours of tabla recital by Jatin Chatterjee of Aligarh, U.P.



#### **Jataka Tales**

#### **The Monkey Gardeners**

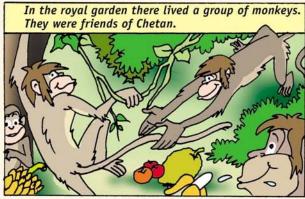






Chetan, the royal gardener, wished to go on a holiday. But there was a hitch.

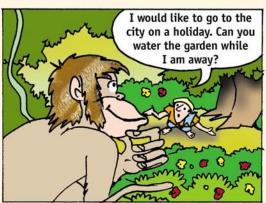






Chetan found Bandhu in the garden.



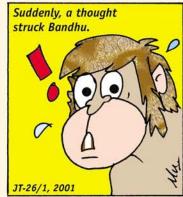




Happily, Chetan handed over the charge of his garden to the monkeys and went away.





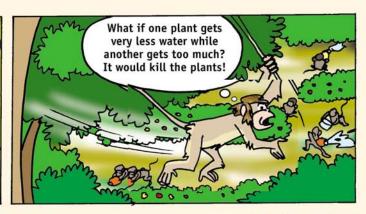


#### **Jataka Tales**

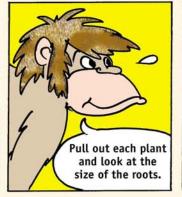
#### **The Monkey Gardeners**

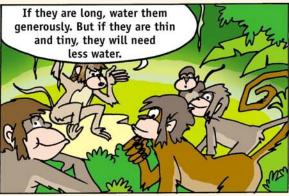


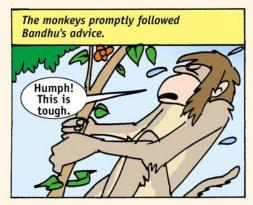




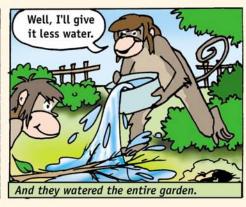


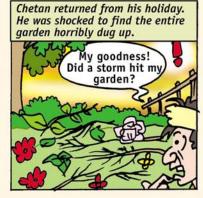


















LEGENDS OF INDIA - 21

#### For the sake of a staff

am and Prakash were disciples of a great Rishi, Vanacharya. Both proved to be excellent scholars. They learnt the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and other scriptures with great attention. They also achieved several Siddhis.

Vanacharya's hermitage was on the banks of river Sarayu. His own guru lived in a valley in the Himalayas. One day he was met by a traveller who told him that his guru would like him to proceed to the Himalayas without any loss of time. Vanacharya stood up. "I must go," he announced to his disciples. "Take care of yourselves."

Surprised, they asked him, "Guruji, what's the urgency?"

"What can be there more urgent for a disciple than his guru's summons? I must hurry," answered Vanacharya.

"But, sir, shouldn't you arrange for the smooth running of your hermitage before you leave?"

"Things would take care of themselves," replied Vanacharya. "When do you propose to return, sir?" asked the disciples.

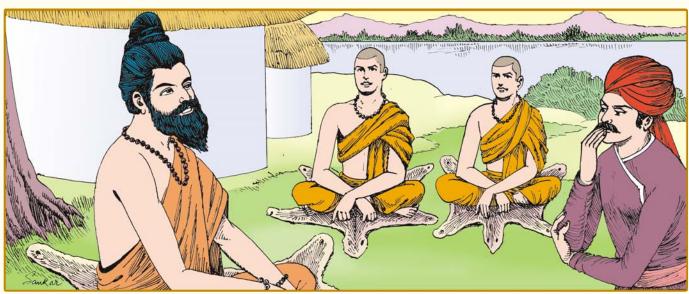
"I don't know; I may not return at all!" Vanacharya did not wish to continue the conversation. He crossed the river forthwith and headed for the Himalayas. The two disciples and the hermit's local admirers bade him farewell.

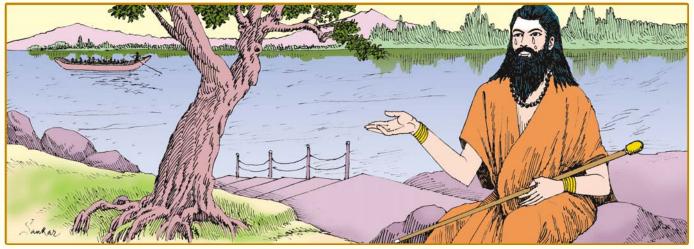
Ram continued to stay in the hermitage; but Prakash left for his native place where he led the life of a holy man. By and by he gathered so many disciples and grew quite famous as Prakash Baba. But he led an extremely austere life. He lived in a small thatched hut. All he had for his personal use were a strong staff and a brass pot, apart from a few pieces of clothes for himself.

However, he was very unhappy to hear that Ram, who was now known as Ram Baba, was leading a luxurious life. One of his disciples, a wealthy landlord, had built for him a comfortable house and provided him with servants. He was also supplied with delicious food cooked especially for him in the landlord's kitchen.

'What a fall!' thought Prakash Baba. He decided to warn his friend about the dangers of falling into the trap of worldly temptations. At last one day he arrived in Ram Baba's ashram and found that what he had heard was not untrue. "My dear friend," he told Ram Baba when there was nobody around, "is it right on your part to be tied down to such comforts in life? They will only distract you from your real aim. Better come away with me to my hermitage, far from this place, and begin your spiritual pursuit anew."

"Why not, if that's God's wish!" said Ram Baba. Just then one of their old friends came in a hurry and





said, "Guru Vanacharya is waiting on the other side of the river. He'll be there only for a short while. He wishes to see both of you. Maybe, he would like both of you to accompany him to the Himalayas."

"What a great coincidence it is that I am here," said Prakash Baba. But he hemmed and hawed and said, "If the Guru asks us to accompany him, how do I inform my disciples about it?"

"The Guru will decide," was Ram Baba's response. But Ram Baba himself did not inform anything to anybody.

Both of them proceeded to the banks of the Sarayu. The ferryboat was full with passengers, but it could take two or three more.

Suddenly Prakash Baba remembered his staff. It was an elegant thing, with a shining metal knob.

"Ram, you proceed. I'll be back with my staff I had left in your room. I shall take the next ferry," said Prakash

Baba. By then Ram Baba and the Guru's messenger had already stepped into the boat. The boatmen began rowing immediately. Prakash Baba was back in half an hour. Meanwhile, there had been a flash flood. The ferryboat did not return from the other shore. And there was no possibility of Prakash Baba crossing the river before the flood receded. That might take several days.

Prakash Baba sat down on a rock and wept. He realised how foolish it was of him to advise his friend against comfortable living. His friend, living amidst luxury, had no attachment for anything. He did not even feel it necessary to inform his disciples about his decision. For him, God was there to take care of everything. But living an austere life outwardly, Prakash Baba had not been able to liberate his mind from bondage to his measly possessions. He lost the golden chance of being with his Guru for the sake of a mere stick! *-Visvavasu* 

#### The Lonesome Sambar

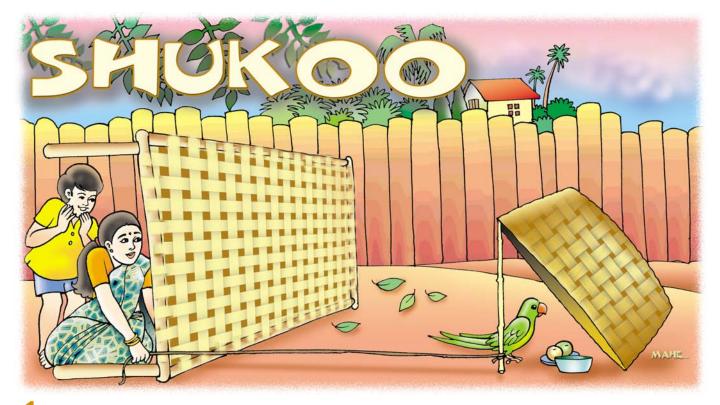
A lady who owned a boarding house was such a penny-pincher that she even skimped on the cheapest food. Her speciality was a thin, watery sambar. One evening, when she had just served Idly with Sambar, one of the boarders, a young student with a healthy appetite, took his plate upto his ear.

"What're you doing?" asked the woman.

"I hear the sambar talking," he replied.

"You don't mean it?" she exclaimed, surprise written all over her face. "What is it saying?"

"It's saying," the young man responded, "'Hey, I'm lonesome! I wish there had been some more grains (used for making sambar) to keep me company."



t was in the late afternoon of a clear, pleasant day of an approaching summer years ago that we (I and my mother) trapped it and put it inside the birdcage that was lying empty in our storeroom since its previous occupant, a parrot whom we called Mitthu, died of natural causes. Although the event took place ages ago when I was hardly seven or eight years of age, I can still recall it vividly as though it happened only quite recently because it's the only event of its nature that has ever taken place in my entire life. That day we had to make a lot of effort and a number of patient attempts before we could succeed in trapping it and putting it behind the bars of the cage.

The idea of catching it came to me on returning from school shortly before noon. I spotted it sitting on the water tank situated in the courtyard of our house. It appeared to have flown there from some faraway place, for it was breathing heavily; perhaps it had alighted there to take a break.

Although the idea of catching it was mine, it was my mother who quickly thought up an ingenious way of going about it which, luckily, worked. Mother has never been as inventive of mind and as dexterous of hand as that day. The manual dexterity with which she finally managed to trap it is normally possessed of by professional bird

catchers, not a lay person like her.

In those days of yore we (I and my siblings) used to keep animals (rabbits and dogs) and birds (parrots and canaries) in our house as pets. They gave us company and pleasure. After school, we used to play and spend most of our leisure time with them, as in those days we children had very few things to entertain ourselves with other than comics and story books: the television had not entered our lives yet and some other popular means of entertainment. Edutainment like computer, multimedia products, the Internet and WWW that are available to people these days were not available to us those days.

Mitthu's death had created somewhat of a void in our lives. And to fill this (vacuum), ever since it died we had been waiting for a bird seller to visit our colony so that we could buy another parrot (in those days bird sellers would visit our colony from time to time hawking different kinds of birds from lane to lane and from door to door and the residents of the colony would buy them to keep them as pets); but none had visited our colony since.

After mother had thought up a way to trap it (which seemed workable), it was now time for us to act—as quickly as we possibly could; for we had no idea at all (how could we have any, anyway?) as to how long it

would continue to stay there before fluttering its wings and disappearing behind one of the nearby houses or trees, or up into the distant, cloudless sky.

So she asked me to go to the storeroom quickly and fetch a hemispherical wicker basket, a length of rope and a stick. I rushed there and brought the things in the twinkling of an eye. Once she got them, she tied one end of the rope to the stick and then set the basket on a slant propped up against the stick almost in the middle of our courtyard in such a way that by pulling at the other end of the rope, the basket could be made to fall. Then, again, she asked me to go to the kitchen and fetch some water in a bowl and few guavas. (It was quite a coincidence that she had bought some guavas from a huckster in the morning the very same day.) Again, quick as a flash, I fetched the things. Once she got them, she placed them under the basket and, with the other end of the rope in her hand, positioned herself behind a cot which was lying upright in one corner of the courtyard, and asked me to hide myself behind it.

Once we had taken our positions, she made a particular kind of sound a few times to attract the attention of the bird towards the bowl of water and the guavas placed under the basket, to entice it there. It worked but only partially, in that the bird spun its head round and

looked down, as if trying to figure out from where the sound had emanated, but didn't move from its position.

She made the sound again, but to no avail. She made it once more. This time the parrot spun round and looked down towards the basket for some seconds and then, to our pleasant surprise, flew down and got perched on the rim of the basket. After staying there for a while, fidgeting, it jumped down in a short hop and, after

looking around for a few seconds, as if to ensure it was not being observed, dipped its beak into the bowl to drink water. Just then mother quickly pulled at the rope, but it escaped being trapped quite smartly and went back to the water tank.

Mother set the trap again and we began waiting expectantly for it to return to the basket. We had to wait for quite some time before it returned there and started pecking a guava. Mother tried again; but, to our disappointment, it escaped, and it regained the tank.

This went on happening for hours. Neither the bird was stopping returning to the basket nor was mother giving up attempting to trap it. It was, however, taking a lot of patience on her part not to quit.

And now it was already four in the afternoon. Mother was feeling very hungry as well as tired now. And so was I. In our attempts to trap the bird, we both had to forgo our lunch.

At last her patience bore fruit and the parrot lost the game it had been playing with us for hours. A slight delay on its part in escaping the trap finally cost it its freedom. It took us nearly an additional half hour and a great deal of precaution to transfer the parrot from under the basket into the cage.

When we had triumphantly transferred it, only then

did we realize that it had been a pet somewhere—for it had a fine string of wool tied around its neck and it called some names that must have been those of the people in whose home it had been a pet.

Shortly afterwards my siblings returned home from their day-shift schools. At first, they couldn't believe that we had caught, and not bought, the parrot. Father, too, took some time to believe it, when he returned from his office later in the evening.



Anyway, we were all very pleased to have it with us. We named it Shukoo. It was relatively large in size compared to the one we had earlier, and looked a superior breed, with its finely curved, hawk-like bright-red bill, prominent posterior and handsome violet-green feathers. But it was very noisy. It squawked a lot. All day. Despite this, very soon we all began to like it and enjoy its company. And it too seemed to like us and enjoy our company, as whenever anyone of us would visit its cage to offer food or water, or to simply to look at her, it would start squawking and hopping about in the cage joyfully.

One afternoon nearly a month after we caught Shukoo, while I and my brothers were playing cricket in our

courtyard, the ball went straight towards the cage. The ball struck the cage so hard that it, together with the hook that came off its position with a violent jerk, flew through the air and burst open before hitting the ground with a loud bang. And Shukoo rose out of it swiftly with a loud screech and flew away, as if it had all along been for this waiting opportunity.

A shocked silence descended on us, all

looking so woebegone. We couldn't believe what had happened. But what had happened had happened; and there was nothing that we could now do to reverse the situation. We all missed Shukoo a great deal after it had flown away. Over nearly the month that it had been in our home, it had become very much like a member of our family. It had learnt to call our names and would call them often, especially when we visited its cage.

But just a week after it escaped, something happened which we had neither expected nor even imagined. It happened in the morning. The day had just broken. We were all still fast asleep when suddenly we were awakened by the squawks of a parrot in our courtyard. On coming

out, we were pleasantly amazed to see Shukoo sitting on the water tank. We recognised it at once by the strip of violent-red ribbon we had tied around its neck just a few days before it escaped. Before we could try to catch it again, it fluttered its wings and in moments disappeared behind the great banyan tree nearby.

Thereafter it visited us many times at irregular intervals, and each time we tried in vain to catch it—except once when we had nearly caught it again.

One evening our maternal grandfather happened to visit us from the village for a few days. He was a very kind-hearted, noble soul. He seldom visited us, if ever, so we were all very pleased to see him and have him with

us. We told him all about Shukoo and also about our collective intention to catch it again.

Grandpa listened with great interest to what we said, and then asked, very softly: "Why do you want to catch it again?"

"So that we could again keep it as a pet," prompted one of us.

"Caged?!" he asked.

"Yes!" we all replied in a chorus, wondering at his question.

"And what would you all

get by keeping it caged?"

"Company... and pleasure," replied one of us.

"So you all intend to cut its wings just for pleasure," he said, looking at us in turn.

"Cut its wings?!" Puzzled, this time I squawked.

"Yes, cut its wings!" he repeated, and added, "Keeping a bird caged is no less than cutting its wings."

These words of Grandpa had such effect on us that we all decided not only not to make any further attempts to catch Shukoo again, but never to keep any bird caged as a pet in future. And we have never kept any since, if memory serves.

- By Sanjay Srivastava

### CHANDAMAMA

**PRESENTS** 

### KALEID S C PE

#### A BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

It was Tony's birthday. He got a lot of gifts. He got a train from his cousin, a book from his aunty, and a batman action toy from his father. He also got 100 rupees from his father and 300 rupees from his uncle. He considered himself rich! "What should I do with this money, Mother?" he asked.

"I'll keep 300 rupees in the bank and you can spend the rest of it as you like," said Mother.

Tony wondered what to buy. 'I know,' he told himself at last, 'I'll buy that car I was telling mother to buy last week.' When he went to the toy store, he found the car was not there. He asked the shopkeeper where it was. All he said was, "Someone bought it this morning. But there are other cars over here that you may like." So a disappointed Tony bought another car and a comics. He also bought some sweets with the balance money.

When he went home, he saw that there was a packet lying unopened. He was wondering who had given it to him. Tony looked at the label and saw it was from his mother. He opened it and guess what he saw? It was the car that he had wanted! He rushed to mother and hugged her. Mother had given Tony a wonderful birthday surprise. He told his mother, "This is the best birthday I've ever had!"

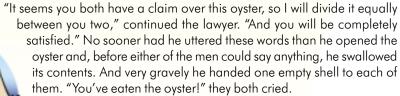


Roshan Shakeel (10), Calicut

#### **HOW A DISPUTE WAS SETTLED**

Once upon a time two men were taking a walk on the seashore, when they found an oyster and began to quarrel about it. "I saw it first," said one man, "and so it belongs to me." "But I picked it up," said the other, "and so I have the right to keep it." As they were quarrelling thus, a lawyer happened to pass that way. Both of them decided to let him settle their dispute. The lawyer was a clever man and soon he found a way to settle the dispute. He told them, "You'll have to accept my decision, whatever it may be. Otherwise you may go to another lawyer."

Both the men agreed to accept his decision.



"That was my fee for deciding the dispute. I divided what remained in a fair manner, didn't?" said the lawyer.

Both the men were quite crestfallen on seeing this, but they could do nothing about it. However, they did learn a lesson: Never to quarrel again.

Nithya Ramachandran (12), Chennai



#### KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE

#### **PLAYTIME**

My brother and I love to play
We go to a park every day.
The grass is soft and green
We keep the garden neat and clean
The soft ground looks like a bed
We jump and fall on our head.
Sometimes I climb up to the top of the tree
Sometimes a bird sings a song to me.
Every child has become a good player.
We breathe in a lot of fresh air.

Rishabh Garg (8), Noida





#### IT IS FUN TO MIMIC

It's fun to mimic like this,
It's fun to mimic like that.
It's fun to roar like a lion,
It's fun to mew like a cat,
It's fun to trumpet like an elephant,
It's fun to bark like a dog,
It's fun to mow like a cow,
It's fun to howl like a fox.
It's fun to mimic like this,
It's fun to mimic like that.

P. Sridhar (14), Walajapet

#### **YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND**

I wish I were an Egyptian queen,
The gentle beauty ever seen,
Buried high, buried deep
With legends all around me while I sleep,
To the one who wakes me
My promise I will keep,
Of sorrow, of pain, of eternal sleep
Kith and kin of theirs shall weep,
Over one's unburied soul,
Roaming on with an unfinished goal.
Of unmasking me as I sleep.
Lo! I still wish I were an
Egyptian queen!

Greeshma Nandana (14), Chennai



#### KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE KALEID@SC@PE

**Teacher**: Correct the sentence: "A bull and cow is grazing in the field."

**Student**: "A cow and bull is grazing in the field."

**Teacher**: How? **Student**: Ladies

first.





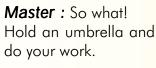
Kamal: Ravi, do you know who a superman is? Ravi: I do. Kamal: Who? Ravi: The fellow who wears his underwear over his pants.

#### Nithya Ramachandran (12), Chennai

Master: Why have you stopped watering the plants?

**Gardener**: Sir, it is raining.





V.H.Spoorthy Reddy (14)

Dargamitte

**Patient**: Doctor! Doctor! You've got to help me!

**Doctor**: What's the matter?

**Patient:** I just can't stop my hands shaking.

**Doctor**: Do you drink a lot?

Patient: Not really, I spill most of it.

#### Aliv Hasan (11) Kharagpur



Father: Son, why do you wear your spectacles while sleeping?

**Son**: To see my dreams more clearly.

**Boss**: Any orders when I was away?

New employee:
Yes, Sir, just one. Two
men came and
ordered me to put
up my hands, and
then took away the
cash from the safe.



#### K.Prafullikha Sri (10) Ramapuram



**Sudhir**: What will you give me if I reach the top of the mountain?

Srinivas: A push!

Arvind Kumar Pandey (10) Gorakhpur

#### **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**

It is said, music is divine. Aren't you interested in music and musical instruments? There are as many as a dozen Western and Indian instruments hidden in this grid. You may search for them horizontally, vertically, diagonally, and backwards.



- M.Shravanth Kumar (13), Mysore.

M	C	L	Α	R	I	Z	E	T	Q
S	Α	X	0	P	Н	0	Ν	Е	В
G	Η	Ν	E	L	U	>	Μ	K	ם
K	Α	F	D	P	I	Α	Z	0	Y
В	R	Α	Ν	0	S	W	T	R	S
I	Р	В	L	F	L	כ	T	Е	Α
Α	D	I	R	Q	S	I	Т	Α	R
Ν	Ν	С	Ν	V	Ε	Ε	Ν	Α	0
D	U	E	L	L	0	Z	X	E	ם
M	0	U	T	Ι	0	R	G	Α	Z

#### **RIDDLES**

1. Why did the skeleton climb up a tree?

-----

Kausalya S. (11), Bangalore



2. Some people are really afraid of Santa Claus! What do you call them?

-----

Shirley D'Cruz (10), Mumbai

3. Where do birds meet for a cup of coffee?



Cecil D'Cruz (10), Mumbai

#### **VARIETY QUIZ**

 Where does August comes before July?

2. Where can one find ice which is not cold?

3. Where can one find sand that is not used for construction?

- G.Ramsri Goutham (14) Wanaparthy puesnou

3. In the word

2. In rice

1. In a dictionary

Variety Quiz

2. Claustrophobic 3. In a nest-cafe

the bones.

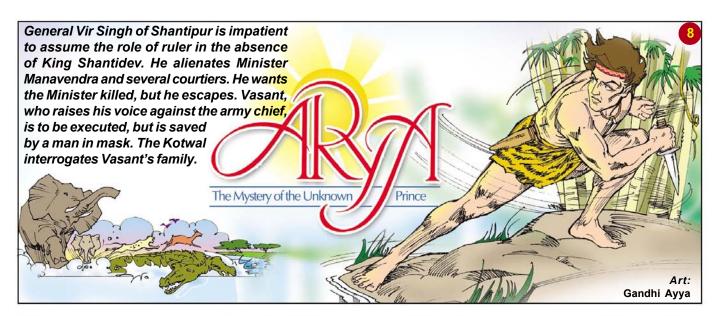
J. Because he wanted

Riddles:

N	Α	9	В	0	Н	I	N	0	W
(a)	<b>(3</b> )	X	Z	O	٦	٦	3	)	D
0	Ø	Ŋ	乛	3		N	À	例	N
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$ \forall $	Œ	I			$\supset$	P	B	(a)	-
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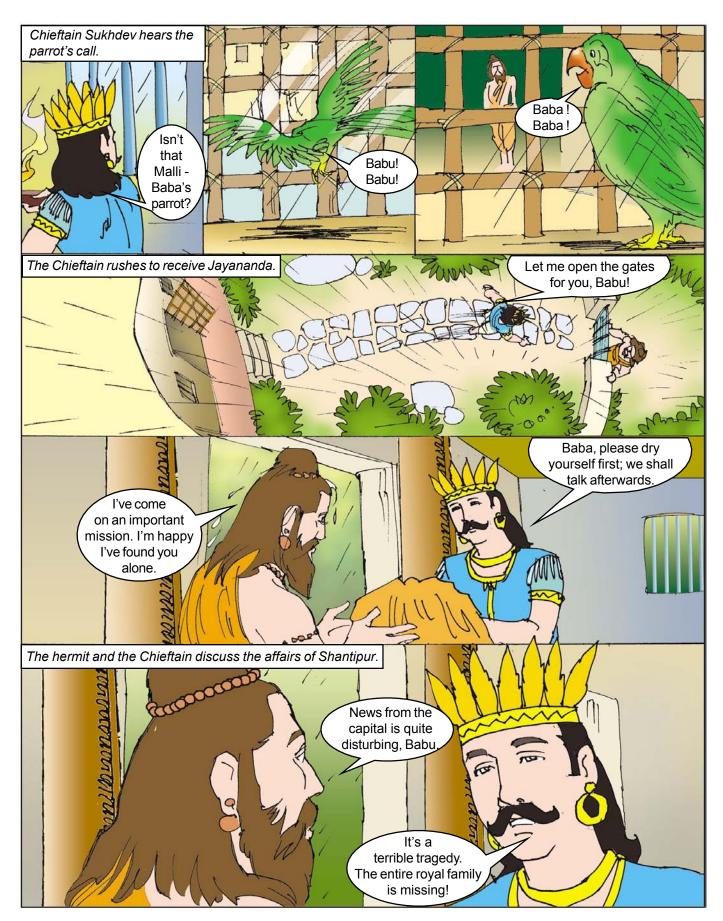
Musical Instruments :

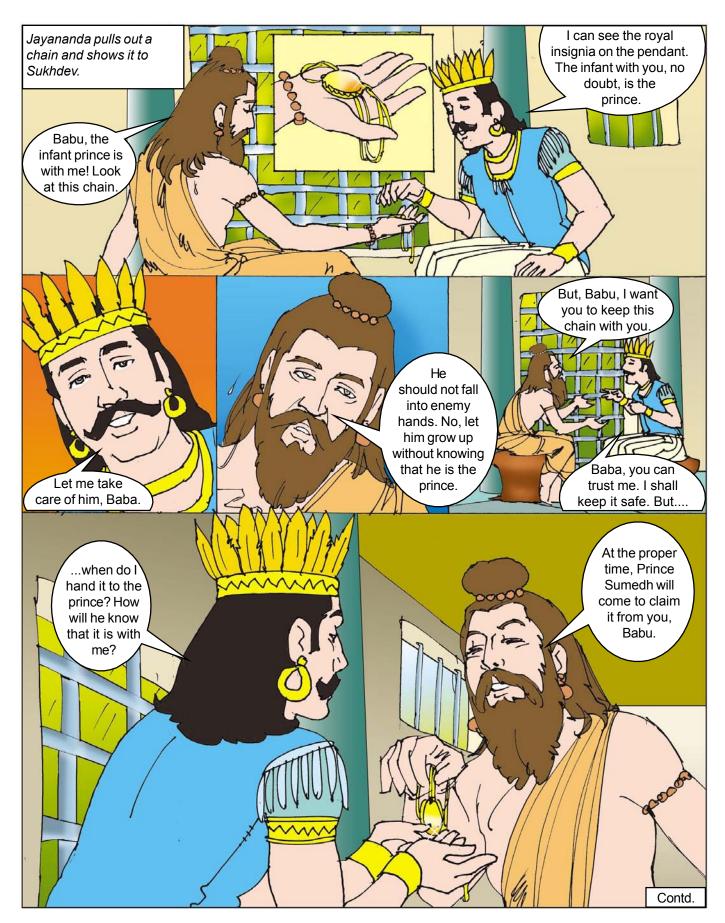
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# This came from the Principal of Vedavalli Vidyalaya, Walajapet, Tamil Nadu:

We are one of the regular subscribers of your magazine Chandamama. Our children take interest in reading the articles, stories, and poems written by children.

#### Dhanshree T.Jadhav, Pune, writes:

I like the stories from the Arabian Nights. I tell all my friends to read *Chandamama*. Please add a new section for pen—friends. It would be very exciting, and we can get new friends from other States and countries through our magazine, *Chandamama*.

# A.Nayanakumari, Kadapa, has this to say:

I am thankful to you for publishing so many useful things which help children to improve their educational skills.

#### Santosh N. writes from Bangalore:

You are doing a very good job by encouraging us children to expose our talents.

#### K.Harish Kumar, Bellary, writes:

I am very happy to read *Chandamama*. I read every item, but what I like most are the Jokes.

#### This came from Kavitha, Delhi:

I am Ann Daisy Kavitha. I was born in Chennai, but I live and study in Delhi. I find *Chandamama* very interesting. Please publish more stories.

## Of scapegoats and whipping boys

# Jagdish Chandra Mohanty, of Kendrapara, wants to know the meaning of the expression to leave someone holding the bag.

You have heard the word "scapegoat", haven't you? When someone is blamed for an act for which he is not responsible, it is said, he is being made a scapegoat.

This can be expressed in a different way alsolike the minister, who is accused of shielding a

criminal, swearing that he is the one *left holding the bag*, as the so–called criminal had only called in to leave a petition with his Secretary.

A similar expression is when someone is described as a whipping boy who is punished for another person's mistakes. In olden times, a boy of ordinary birth used to keep company with a prince. He was given good clothes, food, and education. However, whenever the prince did something wrong, it was the boy who was punished. He was the one to receive the whipping!

# What is a 'mafia'? asks Shantanu Prasad of Birhampur.

Any group (of people) who opposes the established law of a country, mostly covertly rather than overtly, is a mafia (also maffia). Originally, it was a secret criminal society in Sicily, Italy, which had the control of trade in narcotics, gambling and similar activities.

The well-known movie

"Godfather" is woven round

mafias whose members

camouflage themselves as

respectable citizens.







A rainbow is an arc of concentric coloured bands that develops when sunlight shines through tiny water droplets

that are suspended in the air, usually just after a shower. Sunlight is actually composed of a number of different kinds of light — red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. The water

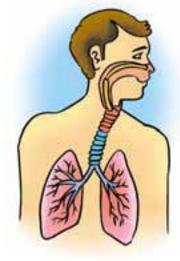
droplets act as tiny prisms, which refract the light, or break it up into its component parts. A rainbow occurs when rain is falling in one portion of the sky and the sun is shining in another. Since only one colour of light is observed from each raindrop, an incredible number of raindrops is required to produce the magnificent spectrum of colours that are characteristic of a rainbow. The legends of many cultures view the rainbow as a kind of bridge between heaven and earth.

Ancient
Europeans believed
that there is a pot of
gold at the end of every
rainbow. Wouldn't you
like to try and find
it, Gai, u?

Who
wants a pot
of gold? Now,
if it were a
bowl of icecream, it would
be a different
matter....

# Respiratory System

The respiratory system is the system of the body that deals with breathing. When we breathe, we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. This exchange of gases is the respiratory system's means of getting oxygen to the blood. Respiration is achieved through the mouth, nose, trachea, lungs, and diaphragm. Oxygen enters the respiratory system through the mouth and the nose. The oxygen then passes through the larynx (where speech sounds are produced) and the trachea, a tube that enters the chest cavity. In the chest cavity, the trachea splits into two smaller tubes called the bronchi. Each bronchus then divides again forming the bronchial tubes. The bronchial tubes lead directly into the lungs where they divide into



many smaller tubes which connect to tiny sacs called alveoli. The inhaled oxygen passes into the alveoli and then diffuses through the capillaries into the arterial blood. The carbon dioxide follows the same path out of the lungs when you exhale. The diaphragm pumps the carbon dioxide out of the lungs and pull the oxygen into the lungs.



know?









## Ruminant

An animal belonging to the order of mammals called Artiodactyla (having a split hoof or an even number of toes), which has a four-chambered stomach and chews its cud is called a ruminant. Common examples of ruminants are cows, sheep, goats, deer, and camels. The ruminant's digestive system consists of the oesophagus, stomach, and the small and large intestines. The stomach is split into four compartments – the **rumen**, **reticulum**, **omasum**, and the **abomasum**. Ruminants are herbivores or plant eaters. The animal swallows its food without chewing, and this passes into the rumen, where it is temporarily stored. Chewing and digestion are then carried out at leisure. The food passes from the rumen to the reticulum, where it is formed into small masses and taken to the mouth for chewing.

When it is swallowed after chewing, it

takes a different course to the third chamber, the omasum and from there, to the abomasums. Gastric digestion takes place in these two chambers, and the food passes from here to the intestine.

family!

- Compiled by Rajee Raman

# Activity

Using the clues given below, see if you can identify the famous scientists mentioned here.

- New Zealand-born British physicist, who received the 1908 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his contribution in the area of radioactivity, discovered the nature and behaviour of the atom.
- 2. One of India's greatest mathematical geniuses, he made a substantial contribution to the analytical theory of numbers and worked on elliptic functions, continued fractions and infinite series.
- 3. Outstanding Indian physicist who won the 1930 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on the scattering of light and for the discovery of the effect named after him.
- 4. German physicist who discovered the X-ray, he received the first Nobel Prize in Physics (1901) for his contribution.

Answers

1. Ernest Rutherford, 2. Srinivasa Ramanujan.
3. C.V.Raman, 4. Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen.





Dear Eco-friends,

We have but one home, this earth. When God made this world, he wanted man, animals and birds to live side by side in their beautiful home. He put man in-charge, because he had blessed him with superior intelligence. However, things do not seem to have worked according to the Master's plan. Man's greed led him to destroy nature and drive away some animals to the point of extinction. What do you think was the result? His own existence became threatened!

What then is the moral of the story? It is for us to realise that everything that has been created has a role to play in maintaining

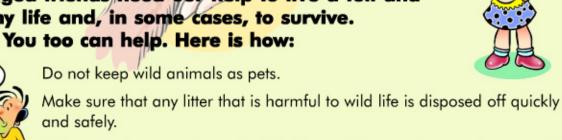
the ecological balance. Hence, one should respect all forms of life.

Our prayer should be "any good that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now."



# Help us! We need you!

Whether they have tooth and claws, or beaks or jaws, our four- legged friends need our help to live a full and healthy life and, in some cases, to survive.



Before mowing your lawn, check it thoroughly to make sure that you will not make some wild creature homeless.

Refuse to buy anything that has been tested on animals, subjecting them to cruelty.

If you live in a house that has a chimney, which is not in use, then make sure that the top is sealed. Other wise it might become the home of an unwanted guest.





Find out more about animals. Especially those that are commonly feared or disliked (like snakes, lizards etc). You will find that it is much easier to respect them when you understand them better.



## Make your own birdbath

Even though we do not see too many birds in the city, it is a good idea to have a bird bath. This will encourage more birds to visit you. Don't worry if you don't have a garden.

You can place your birdbath on the window sill.

#### What you will need:

- 1 large terracota flower pot
- 1 medium sized pot
- 1 small pot
- 1 large terracotta plate with a rim that is about 2" high
- Some poster colours of your choice
- 1 thick and 1 thin paint brush
- A pencil, a sheet of sand paper, a tube of fevicol.





#### What to do:

Scrape the pots with the sand paper, till the surface is smooth.

Paint the pots using a colour of your choice, using a thick brush. Let it dry. Then apply one more coat.

When the pots are completely dry, use your pencil to draw some designs on the pots. Then using a contrast colour and a thin brush fill in the design outlines.



Now put the largest pot upside down. Apply glue on the bottom. Place the medium–sized pot on it (upside down). Apply glue on the base of the medium sized pot.



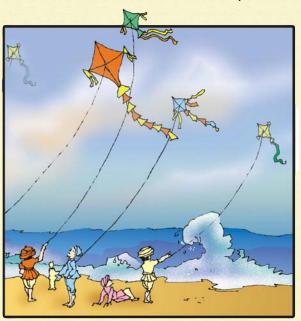
Apply glue around the rim of the pot and place the terracota plate (right side up) on it. You can paint the outside of the plate if you like.

Your birdbath is ready. Fill it up with clean water every day and watch your feathered friends have a ball!

Rabbits do not have lachrymal glands, so they cannot cry. Do you think they're never sad?







# Worship of the sea

The fisherfolk, especially of the West Coast of India, observe Makar Sankranti in January by worshipping the sea. The vast mass of water is treated as a mother, and called Annapoorneswari or the giver of food. This ritualistic worship not only brings together the community, but makes them conscious of the environment, need for dedication to their avocation, and attribution of divinity to the sea.

In Gujarat, Makar Sankranti is celebrated as the start of the sun's journey to the north or *Uttarayan*. This is a day of great joy and is marked by kite-flying in which people of all age groups take part. That day the skies will be dotted with thousands of colourful

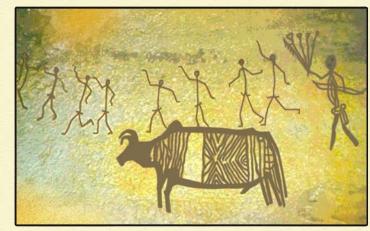
kites which rise to great heights in a spirit of mirthful competition. The occasion is marked by great excitement.

# Rock shelters in heritage list

The famous rock shelters of Bhimbetka, in Madhya Pradesh, have been added to the UNESCO's

World Heritage list. The caves have paintings belonging to the Mesolithic period (between 3500 and 2000 BC).

These caves were discovered just about 50 years ago by Prof. W. Wakanker of Vikram University, Bhopal. There are nearly 500 cave-shelters. The paintings mostly depict stories from the *Mahabharata*. In fact, the place is called after the Pandava prince, Bhimasena.





**Teacher**: Didn't you promise to behave?

Akash: Yes, sir.

**Teacher**: And didn't I promise to punish you if you didn't? Akash: Yes, sir, but

since I broke my promise, you didn't have to keep yours.

Laugh till you drop!

Customer: Waiter, there's a caterpillar on my salad.

Waiter : Don't worry sir, there is no extra charge.



യമായു

Gita: Doctor, Doctor, my son has swallowed my pen. What shall I do?

**Doctor**: Use a pencil till

I get there.

#### യയയ

Mother: Why did you get such a low mark in

that test?

Junior: Because of

absence.

Mother: You mean you were absent on the day

of the test?

**Junior:** No, but the kid who sits next to me was.



## Dushtu Dattu

Dattu is spending the weekend at his grandparents' place. He loves playing with their dog, Jimmy.







# Colouring fun

What a lovely
underwater scene!
Why don't you brighten it up a
little more, using all your
favourite colours?







# Find the missing twin

Tippy Parrot is very unhappy over the separation from her twin sister, Chippy, who has been left behind in the pet store. Hiroko has promised to help her out by bringing Chippy to her. Can you help Hiroko identify Chippy from among the three parrots in the store?

January 2004 48 Chandamama





# Spot the eight differences

These two pictures look exactly alike, don't they? But they're not!

See if you can find all the differences between them.

# Cheenti and the cake

Cheenti ant would love to get at that delicious-looking cake in Raju's hand. But, alas, she can't reach it! Can you help her find a path to the cake through the maze?

(Answers on page 64)



# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## Let's find the Capital city

E	R	0	L	A	G	N	A	В	Т
R	М	U	M	В	A	ı	Н	R	D
A	A	P	X	Т	U	0	I	w	A
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N	A	s	L	N	0	K	N	D	R
ı	w	N	D	U	L	z	A	М	E
R	L	R	x	0	E	N	G	S	D
S	U	Z	K	A	N	Т	A	P	Y
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We can imagine you sit glued to your TV on January 26 every year to watch the Republic Day Parade and be fascinated by the show put up by the personnel of our armed services, the cultural pageant, especially the floats of the different States, and of course the march past of school children and their tableaux.

Every year, invariably, almost every State sends a float, making you wish that you could go round at least some of the States. Well, do you remember the names of their Capitals?

The grid seen here has the names of some of them. They are given horizontally, vertically, diagonally and backwards.

Can you trace them out from the 'alphabet-box'?

#### Who am I?

I am one among a group of a people who made a long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in the 1600s to find freedom. Do you know who I am?

My first letter is in PEACE but not in NIECE.

My second letter is in GIVE but not in GAVE.

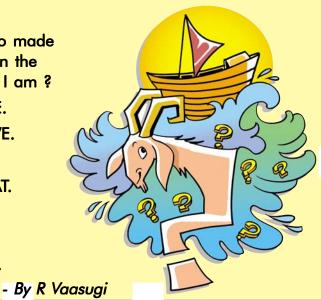
My third letter is in MILK but not in MINK.

My fourth letter is in GOAT but not in BOAT.

My fifth letter is in FREE but not in FEEL.

My sixth letter is in HIM but not in HAM.

My seventh letter is in MAY but not in DAY.



True Cases of Mystery and Detection

# THE STRANGE CASE OF LITTLE TOMMY

ne fine holiday morning in August 1982, little Tommy went missing! The 5-year-old boy and his parents were picnicking by a lakeside near New York. Tommy was a playful and curious kid, as children usually are at that tender age. He tried to catch a fluttering butterfly, chased the rabbits right into their burrows, and hopped and skipped and danced all over the soft green grass.

Suddenly his parents realised that their little boy was not to be seen anywhere. "Tommy! Tommy! Tommy dear! Where are you?" called his mother at the top of her voice. But there was no response. With the help of the other people gathered there and the police, they looked for the lost boy. They looked for him in every bush, under every hedge and behind every trunk. Alas, they found no trace of little Tommy. It seemed he had hopped and skipped and danced away into thin air.

By the afternoon the Sheriff himself arrived on the spot with twenty of his lieutenants. They combed the area for miles together with the frantic effort to find the lost child by sundown. Fire service men and divers entered the deep waters again and again. For, many feared that little Tommy had fallen into the lake and drowned.

"My boy surely wouldn't have gone very far. You see, he has left his shoes behind!" said the mother consoling herself with tearful eyes.

It was not before long when an officer stumbled upon the boy's shirt in a shrub near the shore. The search groups came to a halt, as if turned to stone. A hush fell all around. Did this seem to confirm the ominous fear? Was little Tommy really drowned in the lake?

It was already twilight and getting darker and darker. The search teams found it difficult to look for the lost boy in the dense woods. The Sheriff supervising the proceedings decided to call it off until the next day.

Where did little Tommy disappear? Was he kidnapped? Was he drowned? Did he follow the rabbits into their burrows?

At dawn the following morning the hunt for the missing boy resumed in earnest. In spite of the best efforts by the police and the detectives, no breakthrough was made. Nor could they obtain any clues



Phil Jordan it seems had already helped the police and the detective agencies in similar cases. Who was he? He was known as a psychic with strange mental powers and unusual skill and abilities.

Just by touching and feeling a dress or any clothes once worn by someone he could establish a direct link with that person and know about him. Could he then locate the lost child?

So Tommy's shirt found by the lakeside was brought and given to Phil Jordan. He concentrated and took it in his hands. Then slowly he ran his fingers over it and then he ran the material through his fingers. As he did so, image after image passed on in his mind like a film. The next moment he took out a

The drawing depicted a lake, an area with boats arranged upside down, a large rock and a tree with a boy sleeping under it.

pencil and a sheet of paper and made a sketch in every

detail of all that he had seen while he held the missing

"Don't worry. The boy is alive. He is sleeping at that very spot!" he confidently assured the investigators.

The next morning he joined the others near the lake at the edge of the forest. To everyone's astonishment he requested Tommy's mother to get the shoes that her son had left behind. The anxious woman, who still clutched

the shoes as a remembrance of her lost child, handed them over to him. Phil Jordan placed the pair of shoes on his palms held high and slowly drifted into a reverie. Then on waking up he quietly said, "Follow me."

So into the deep woods by the lakeside marched the psychic, Phil Jordan.

Behind him followed the police, the detectives, the boy's parents, and a host of curious and amazed townsfolk. It must have been almost an hour before they arrived at the very spot depicted by the drawing.

There was indeed the lake, an area with overturned boats, a rock and a tree.

Under the tree slept a small boy.

He was none other than little

Tommy! Seeing his mother, he ran
to her and jumped into her loving arms.

In fact the kid had wandered off and lost

his sense of direction. So, instead of heading back to the picnic spot he had walked away from it and completely lost his way. But the police chief and the detectives were bewildered.

For they claimed that they had earlier thoroughly searched this particular area but had not found any trace of the missing boy. Had it not been for Phil Jordan's clues they would not have bothered to search the place again.

Indeed, Phil Jordan did solve the mystery of the missing boy. But the enigma remains, how could he do it? And where was Tommy when the others searched the spot that sheltered him?

## Did you know?

boy's shirt.

The gossamer thread of a spider's web is stronger than steel thread of the same diameter.

George Washington was terrified of being buried alive. He had directed that he be laid out for three days after he died, just to make sure that he was dead.



## **READ AND REACT**

#### A NOVEL CONTEST FOR READERS

Cash prize of Rs. 250 for the best entry

#### Read the story below:

Ram Thirth was a wealthy merchant of Rayadurg. He kept a retinue of servants. Narayan was one of them. His main work was to dust the rooms in the huge mansion and keep every item neat and tidy in its place.

One day, he picked up a coin from the floor and handed it to his master. "I appreciate your honesty, Narayan. You may keep the coin for yourself as a reward," said Ram Thirth.

A few days later, a diamond neclace went missing in the house. A thorough search proved futile. Ram Thirth called each of the servants and questioned them. No, none of them had taken it, nor even seen it.

The last one to be called was Narayan.

# Now, presume what Narayan would have told his master. You may keep in mind the following points:-

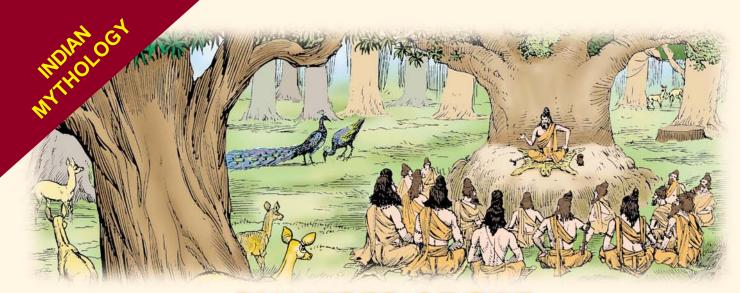
- ♦ There are two possibilies–Narayan has seen the necklace/he has not seen it.
- If he had seen it, what did he do with it?
- How do you think Ram Thirth would have responded to Narayan's explanation?
- ♦ Do you approve of Ram Thirth rewarding his servant?

Write your reaction in 100-150 words and send it to us in an envelope superscribed "Read and React". Attach the coupon given below:

CLOSING DATE : January 31, 2004					
School	Date of birthClass				
	Pincode				
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# CUMPSES OF THE DEVI BHAGAVATAM

housands of years ago there was a forest called Naimisharanya. It had been prophesied that when Kaliyuga—the era of Falsehood—would dawn on the earth, a certain area of the forest would remain out of its hold. A number of Rishis had chosen their abode in that area of the forest.

Among them was Suta who had heard from Vyasadeva, the great author of the *Mahabharata* and several *Puranas*, many a legend of gods, demons, and men. On behalf of the Rishis, one day Shounaka prevailed upon Suta to narrate to them some of the significant incidents he knew.

"Well, I shall tell you episodes from the *Devi Bhagavatam*—a Purana that my master Vyasadeva had narrated to his son, Suka. I, too, had the privilege of hearing it. Do you know that Vishnu once lost his head?"

"How strange! We could never have dreamt of such a thing!" said the Rishis in a chorus.

"This is how it happened," said Suta, and he then narrated the episode.

Once, when the sage Vyasa desired to have a son, he prayed to Lord Vishnu. He was advised by Vishnu to

seek the Grace of the Divine Mother, for she alone could alter the destiny of a human being and give him a child even if he was not destined to have one.

Vishnu also told Vyasa that once when he himself was in a crisis—because his head got snapped—it was the Divine Mother who came to his rescue.

Vyasa was curious and wanted to know about the incident. Vishnu told him how it happened. Once he had to launch a prolonged fight against the demons. Aeons passed and there was no respite.

One day, while the demons had fled from the battlefield, Vishnu sat down under a tree. His chin resting on his bow, he fell asleep.

Just then the gods came to seek his sanction for a certain Yajna they proposed to perform. They saw Vishnu asleep. They waited for a while and had no idea how long they must wait.

"O Lord, create a tiny creature who can go near Vishnu and snap the chord of his bow. It would then straighten up. That would wake up Vishnu," the gods told Brahma.

Brahma created a tiny worm and gave it instructions. The worm crawled close to Vishnu and cut the chord of

#### 1. WHEN VISHNU BECAME HORSE-HEADED

his bow. It straightened up with such force that it tossed Vishnu's head off!

The gods stood stupefied. They never expected such a thing to happen. They cried out their shock in many words.

But their guru, Brihaspati, told them, "It is no use shedding tears on what has already happened. The question is how to undo it, or turn the situation to our advantage. Now that this has happened to the mighty Vishnu, and the great Brahma was unaware of the result of his action, we can only look up to the Divine Mother—the supreme source of all power.

The gods sat in meditation and directed their prayers to the Divine Mother. She appeared before them.

"Mother, see what has happened to Lord Vishnu. How could such a thing happen?" asked gods, who appeared baffled.

"Surely, nothing happens without a cause. Once Goddess Lakshmi, gazing at Vishnu's charming face, thought, 'What if this head disappeared?' That was just a fancy. But whatever idea flashes in the mind of a god or a goddess becomes a force. Lakshmi's fancy, too, became a force and worked itself out."

The Divine Mother continued: "But that is not the only cause of this unusual situation. Once a horse-headed demon prayed to me for a queer boon. I had to grant it. He would not die unless someone who had a physical form similar to his faced him in a battle. The demon was sure that a second creature like him could not be possible. He was not wrong, for no mortal could assume his form. He became a terrible menace. Here was the opportunity



for Vishnu himself to put an end to the menace with a horse's head on his neck."

The Divine Mother, after giving this message, disappeared. The gods then arranged for a horse's head to be put on Vishnu's body. Called Hayagriva or the horse-headed, Vishnu advanced upon the demon's domain. A fierce battle ensued, ending in the demon's death.

Thus had the accident that had befallen Vishnu become a blessing for those who were harassed by the demon. (To continue)

## Second Opinion!

Looking at the sick man, the doctor decided to tell him the awful truth.

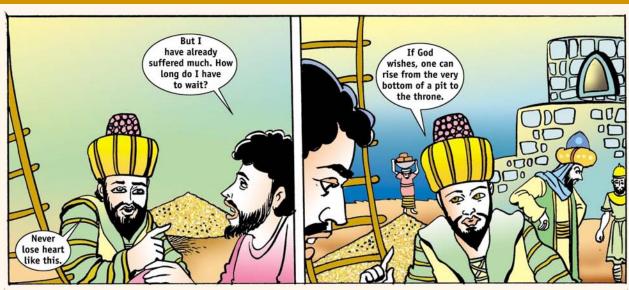
"Ramu, I believe you'd wanted to know the facts. You've only a few more hours to live. Is there anyone you would like to see?"

Ramu's lips moved, and the doctor leaned over his patient to hear the feeble answer. "Yes," came the faint whisper.

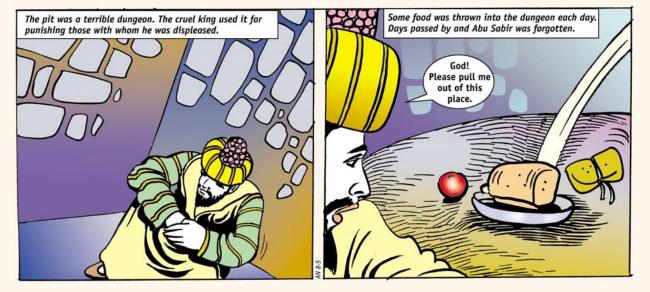
"Who is it, Ramu? Just tell me and I'll get him."

Making a last superhuman effort, Ramu wheezed: "Another doctor!"

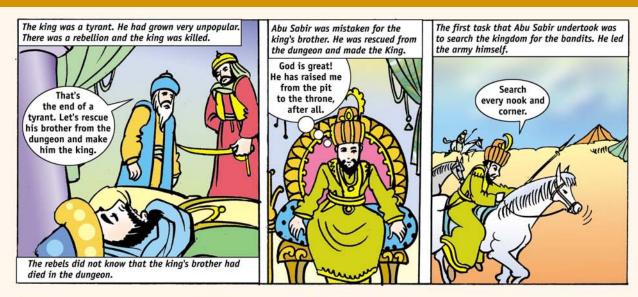
### The Arabian Nights: Pit to throne

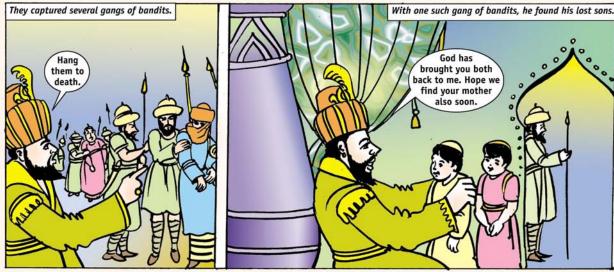






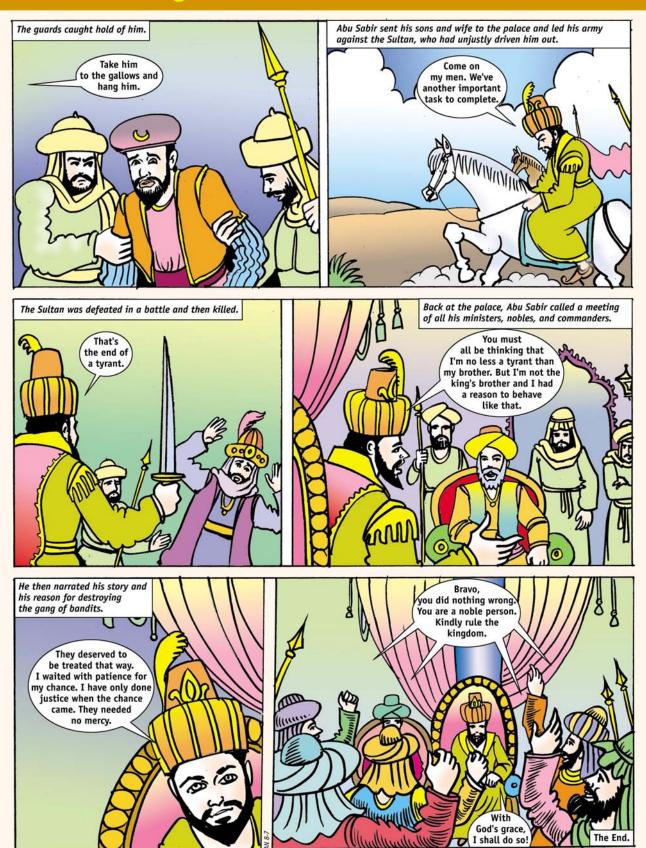
#### **The Arabian Nights: Pit to throne**







### **The Arabian Nights: Pit to throne**



#### **SPORTS**

# Historic Win for India

ndia waited for 22 years to beat Australia in their home turf and create Test history when they scored a 4 wicket victory at Adelaide on December 16 last. Having forced a draw earlier at Brisbane in the first of the four Test series during India's current tour of Australia, our success in that country was the fourth in cricket history. The first was at Melbourne in the third Test (1977-78) by 222 runs, then in the same series at Sydney by one innings and two runs, while the third was at Melbourne in the third Test in the 1980-81 series by 59 runs.



V.V.S. Laxman



Rahul Dravid

At Adelaide, Australia piled up a formidable 556 runs in the first innings and India replied by scoring 523 runs, leaving it to the bowlers to restrict Australia's second innings. Ajit Agarkar achieved this by taking 6 wickets, and Australia were all out for 196 runs. India took a chance and scored 233 runs with 4 wickets to spare. The winning shot came from Rahul Dravid—a four out of his 72 not out. In the first innings, he had scored 233 runs in 594 minutes, receiving solid support from V.V.S.Laxman who scored 148 valuable runs, to wipe away disappointment from the face of the Indian team,

when both captain Sourav Ganguly and the run-getter Sachin Tendulkar went out for 2 runs and one run respectively. Agarkar, who made his first two-digit score (11) after being bowled out for ducks consecutively in his earlier five innings, earning the epithet "Bombay Duck", had decided on revenge and took 6 wickets when the Kangaroos played their second innings.

Rahul Dravid's 233 runs in India's first innings became the highest for an Indian player abroad. He went past Sunil Gavaskar's 221 made at the Oval in 1979. In total number of Test runs, he is now behind only Dilip Vengsarkar (6,868), Sachin Tendulkar (8,920), and Sunil Gavaskar (10,122 runs). With his 6,276 runs from 73 matches, Dravid went past 6,215 runs amassed by Mohammed Azharuddin from 99 matches.

India, now 1 up, will go to play two more Tests in Australia with greater confidence. The question on everybody's lips is, will India beat the World Champions?

#### **Asian Champion**

Arjun Atwal created history early in December by becoming the first Indian to be declared Asia's Golfer of



the Year. He was crowned the *Arjun Atwal* Asian PGA Tours Players' Player at Bangkok, Thailand. He had just then won the Volvo Masters of Asia Championship. Earlier in 2003, 30-year-old Atwal had won the Carlsberg Malaysian Open and the Hero Honda Masters in India.

# Commonwealth Games Comes to India

With India's success at the 2002 Common–wealth Games held at Manchester still fresh in memory, India managed to get the 2010 Games allotted to this country. The 2006 Games will be held in Melbourne, Australia. The venue of the 2010 Games will be New Delhi, which has the distinction of holding two Asiads in 1952 and 1982. After the Commonwealth Games in 2010, India will be really qualified to bid for the Olympic Games, some day!

# Alexitage Railway

This happened a little over a hundred years ago. A railway line was being laid between Kalka in Haryana and Shimla in Himachal Pradesh. Several tunnels had to be cut.

A mountain was being bored from either side for a 1 km long tunnel. When the work was over, it was found the two ends did not meet in the middle. All the labour of several days, and weeks, and months put in by hundreds of workers went waste. The Chief Engineer was William Barog. The British government imposed a token penalty of one rupee, which was deducted from his salary. That did not upset him

much. But what he took to heart was the fact that he had gone

wrong in laying the alignment.

How would he face the authorities again? How would he explain his failure to the workers? He felt ashamed of himself. He went for a walk through the tunnel and never came back. Hours later, his body was recovered.

The railway was opened for service on November 9, 1903. The magnitude of the work can be gauged from the fact that the 96.6 km track passes through as many as 102 tunnels, goes over nearly 970 bridges and slides along 920 curves.

This mountain railway in India is considered the highest in the world. Kalka is 656 m above the sea level, and Shimla 2,075 m. The gradient over which the track had been laid can be imagined to some extent.

Time was when people travelled from Kalka to Shimla by foot or on horseback. Around 1816, the government established a military cantonment at Sabathu, near Shimla. The Commandant built a log-

hut for his residence. In 1821, Captain Charles Pratt Kennedy took over as Commandant. He built for himself a residence which was the first permanent house in Shimla.

He was well known for his hospitality and he used to entertain visitors. By 1831, Shimla came to be known as "the resort of the rich, the idle, and the invalid". Soon, some 60 houses came up on the hills. In 1827, the Governor-General Lord Amherst spent the summer months in Shimla. Lord William Bentinck, who succeeded him, also visited Shimla and suggested that a township be



built so that the government could make Shimla its summer headquarters.

But everybody found the long journey arduous. The possibility of laying a railway line was discussed within the government in 1847. However, the earliest survey was carried out only in 1884. The project was commissioned in 1901 by the Viceroy, Lord Dalhousie, and completed two years later.

A steam engine called "Hill Power" run on coal, and three bogies filled with passengers on the maiden run covered

the distance in 10 hours. In the next 60 odd years, the sparks from the engine falling on the trees below were often causing forest fires. So, in 1976, diesel engines were put on the track.

The running time was now cut by four hours and the engine could haul three more bogies. Somehow, these engines did not find favour with tourists who thought that the chug-chug engines had an old word charm about them. The Government of India took into account the drop in the number of tourists and decided to bring back the coal engines exclusively for tourists from abroad. A 50-member group would now be paying anything like Rs. 1,08,100 for a two way journey.

The journey is worth the money because of the heart-warming ride on the 'toy train' through the icy mist falling from the sides of the mountains and the scenic beauty wherever the mountain walls do not obstruct the view. The scenery and the marvels of construction are enough to keep the traveller spellbound. Of the 100 odd tunnels, the Barog tunnel, named after the engineer, is the longest–1,143 m.

A tunnel at Taradevi, where a temple dedicated to the goddess is located on the hill, is steeped in superstition. Local people believed that the goddess had not approved of a tunnel beneath the hill. So much so, when the work was completed, a huge serpent emerged to send the workers fleeing for their life! Non-believers, however, pointed out that the long iron pipe running along the tunnel had been mistaken for a serpent! But many pooh-poohed that contention.

The Kalka-Shimla railway is poised to be included in the World Heritage list.

### A TRAIN OF PORTERS

When Governor General Lord
Amherst went on a visit to Shimla
in 1827, he rode on horseback
followed by a few liveried servants
and nearly a thousand porters,
carrying all the luggage needed
for their stay on the hills.



#### **2004 A LANDMARK YEAR FOR**

# Mickey Mouse



That most lovable comic character, Mickey Mouse, took shape on a notepad which Walt

Disney had carried with him during a long train journey from New York to Los Angeles sometime in 1928. Mickey's date of birth, if one may call it so, is generally taken as November 18, 1928. That day, the first of 140 movies in which Mickey Mouse had acted between then and now was premiered in a New York City theatre. The film was Steamboat Willie and it was an instant success. Mickey Mouse, now 75 years old (and he has not been growing!), will make a debut in a 3-D movie in 2004. It will be a landmark year for him.

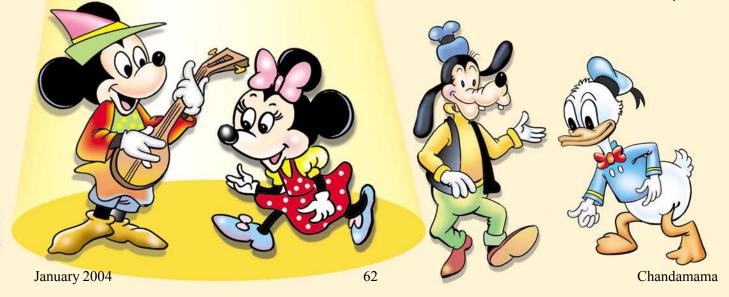
An account of Mickey Mouse's advent in the world makes interesting reading. Walt Disney had some differences with his financier over his

cartoon creation *Oswald the Rabbit*. Disney went to New York to sort out the differences and ask

Not many among the present generation might be aware of Chandamama's association with Walt Disney. The founders, Shri B. Nagi Reddi and the late Shri Chakrapani, were admirers of the creator of Mickey Mouse. What drew them to Disney was the fact that almost all his characters are friendly and promote family values. Some of them may appear stupid, but then that is only for the sake of humour and lively action. It was the Chandamama Group that introduced all of Disney's characters including Mickey Mouse and his friends to the Indian readers through its popular Wonder World series of publications. Chandamama held the publishing rights of Disney Comics and franchise for marketing Mickey for monetary help to bring about some improvements in the character. It appears, the financier not only rejected Disney's request, but took possession of the Rabbit under copyright laws.

When he boarded the train for his return journey, Disney was a thoroughly dejected man. He realised the need to create another comic character before he went back to his studios in Los Angeles. In view of the long journey ahead, he pulled out his notepad and began drawing. Suddenly he remembered the mouse he had seen in his house

six years earlier. It was not scared of human beings. In fact Disney found it rather friendly. He was moved when the mouse stood up as if



Mouse merchandise during early '80s.

to beg for food. That sight had remained etched in his memory.

The lines on the notepad slowly began to take shape. It was that of a mouse with unusually large round ears. Disney's wife, Lillian, was travelling with him. On making a query by her, Disney answered that he would call it Mortimer Mouse. Lillian somehow did not like the name. They spent the rest of the journey discussing an apt name. By the time the train steamed into Los Angeles, the two had agreed on a name. Walt Disney, on meeting

his co-workers told them that he had come back with a new comic character. He showed them the caricature and introduced him–Mickey Mouse!

Disney had visualised Mickey to be more human and that is why he drew him with fingers. But he gave him only four fingers as he found them easier to draw than five fingers of uneven length. By 1927, movies had become talkies and *Steamboat Willie* had dialogues and music. Disney decided to lend his own voice for his creation. This he did for all of Mickey's first films. Later on, he used professionals for dubbing the dialogues.

Mickey Mouse has not grown or added age in the past 75 years, but his appearance has been undergoing changes. Apart from changing the colours of his clothes, Disney gave him a white patch in his eyes. This is the most distinguishing change he made in the 38 years he had lived with Mickey.

Even with his first film of 1928, Mickey Mouse had become a celebrity. But people were not satisfied with seeing him only in movies. They wanted to see him in action elsewhere, too. So, Walt Disney bagan publishing comic strips with Mickey from 1930 and gave them to daily newspapers. Initially the



Walt Disney

strips were in black and white. The first strip was titled *The Audacious Exploits of Mickey Mouse on the Isle of Mystery*. From 1932, the strips appeared in colour in the Sunday editions of the same dailies. The first colour comics was *Mickey Mouse and the Dog Catcher*.

Disney never thought of giving Mickey any brother or sister. But he gave him friends—Donald Duck and Goofy—and the trio became very popular, especially with children who watched their

movies. Seeing their popularity in movies and newspapers, Disney began publishing a magazine, with stories of their adventures. In course of time, Disney added more characters, including Mickey's girl friend, Minnie Mouse.

Walt Disney passed away in 1966. The first Mickey Mouse 3–D movie is being released 38 years after his death. *Mickey is Twice Upon a Christmas* will be produced with the latest digital technology.

One of the best tributes ever paid to Mickey Mouse came from former US President Jimmy Carter, who said: "He speaks the international language of friendship."





★ All over the world, there is a vigorous campaign going on against the use of tobacco in any form. When was tobacco first used?

#### - Poornima Bhat, Bangalore

European explorers of the 16th century, like Christopher Columbus, who reached Central America, came upon the natives who were called American Indians, smoking dried leaves. It was believed that these leaves, called tobacco, had medicinal properties. The French ambassador to Portugal, Jean Nicot, took these leaves to his country and introduced smoking which, some Frenchman found, gave relief from headache.

The tobacco plant was given the name nicotinia. The substance found in tobacco was called nicotine, which is nowadays considered harmful. Tobacco is used for smoking (cigarette, cheroot, pipe) and chewing (a common habit in India). In certain countries, the governments have even brought in legislation against these pernicious habits.

#### ★ Will you explain what is epistemology?

#### - Manohar Dubey, Kanpur

In simple language, it is the theory of knowledge. When you have a desire to know, you put forth a question and wait for an answer. In philosophy, there is a branch that looks at problems surrounding knowledge itself. Knowledge is not unlimited; what somebody knows is directly related to what is already known!

This leads to the question: is knowledge

reliable? Some philosophers would say 'no', because knowledge is prone to change. Georgias, who lived around 450 B.C., used to say, nothing existed! If anything did exist, nobody would be aware of it! There was Plato (450 B.C.) who said everything has a form, or shape. At the same time, the real form is invisible! Philosophers who followed them used to tear their hair thinking about these theories which, they concluded, did not lead anobody anywhere! They stated that by reasoning alone could one acquire knowledge—why, when, what, where, and how!

#### **ALL THE ANSWERS**

#### PUZZLE DAZZLE

#### Let's find the Capital city

						10000	_	$\overline{}$	
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#### Find the missing twin - 1

#### Spot the eight differences

Bird's wing missing; giraffe's mouth; horse's ear; giraffe's hoof; cat's mouth; fern behind the cat missing; leaf on the ground missing; one flower missing.

#### Who am I?

**PILGRIM** 



Date : .....

#### A TREASURE-TROVE FOR TALENTED TOTS



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**Photo Caption Contest** 

Can you write a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?

You may write it on a post card marking it:

## Photo Caption Contest CHANDAMAMA

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The best entry will receive a Prize of Rs.100 and it will also be published in the issue after the next.







#### Winning Entry

"Ready for a ride"

"Ready for a skip"

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November 2003 Lucky Winner:

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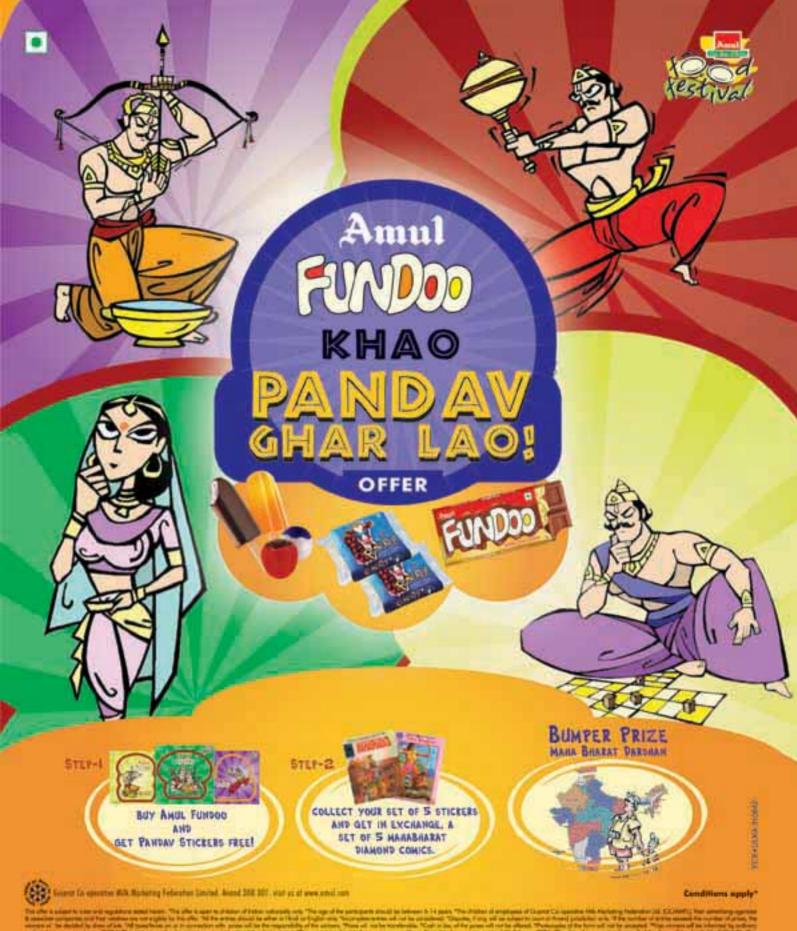
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Printed and Published by B. Viswanatha Reddi at B.N.K. Press Pvt. Ltd., Chennai - 600 026 on behalf of Chandamama India Limited No. 82 Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097. Editor: B. Viswanatha Reddi (Viswam)



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# \* Happy & Prosperous New Year and Sankaranthi



